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Nip, tuck, tweak your life in 10 super steps

■ METRO/A17
2 scions of wealthy families held for 'ecstasy' tablets in Pasig City

■ NEWS/A2
'Silent Majority' group rues UP refusal to host prayer rally

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Massive tunnel used by drug traffickers found under Mexico-US border

PHILIPPINE INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS AND VIEWS
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Knockout empanaditas served at Palace welcome

By Christine Avendaño

MOM COMES PACQUIAO Empanadita, the pastry of champions.

Palace executive chef Ballen Austria created an empanadita (chicken-filled turnover) for Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao, who defeated Mexican Erik Morales in their third fight in Las Vegas last Saturday. Pacquiao's mother, Dionisia, is a fan of the empanadita, which is sold at Pacquiao's restaurant in General Santos City.

Austria said the empanadita was served to the Pacquiao family during the welcome reception for the boxer at Malacañang on Wednesday.

Austria said he was inspired to create the empanadita after watching Pacquiao's fight with Morales on pay-per-view television.

"I was thinking of something that would be Filipino, and I thought of the empanadita," Austria said.

Austria said he was also thinking of the boxer's mother when he created the empanadita.

"I thought of Mrs. Pacquiao because she's a fan of empanadita," Austria said.

Austria said he used chicken, potatoes, carrots and peas for the empanadita's filling.

He said he also added a touch of curry powder to the filling.

Austria said he was happy that Pacquiao's family liked the empanadita.

"I'm happy that they liked it," Austria said.

Bishops get hate mail, too, but they don't read them

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE Philippines (CBCP) has received a steady stream of angry messages a few days before it's set to draft a pastoral statement on the national election.

The messages were mostly in the form of letters, text messages and e-mails, the bishops learned.

BISHOPS, A2

THE STREETS OF MANILA had never seen anything like it. They could hardly contain the wildly cheering crowds, the pride, adulation and affection of Filipinos who have been on a desperate search for heroes.

Multitudes cheer RP idol

VIEW FROM THE TOP of a multi-story building in Binondo with its balconies overflowing with scores of Manny's admirers.

Five-hour parade stops work, traffic, even the rain

By Volt Contreras

IN THE WORDS OF AN AVID "Pacman" fan, this is how Filipinos celebrate a "clean" victory.

With a crowd-drawing power exceeding that of any show biz celebrity or politician, boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao returned home yesterday to the cheer of tens of thousands in the streets of Manila and Quezon City, five days after crushing a Mexican boxing legend.

Mammoth crowds turned up for his five-hour victory parade, postponing lunch, stopping classes, or leaving work just for a glimpse of the 27-year-old fighter in a triumphal motorcade. Even if it rained on his parade, the sun was up in the hearts of the admiring multitudes.

Freda Pellicer, a 55-year-old street vendor from North Harbor, came as early as three hours before the parade started, holding up a montage of Pacquiao's front page photos which she had neatly pasted on folders.

"Everybody's happy because we all know he won fair and square. His victory was clean," she said in Filipino, in an apparent reference to the country's notorious political issues.

Non-stop applause greeted Pacquiao

MULTITUDES, A6

AND THE PUNCHLINE is ... President Arroyo wins Round 1 at the Palace where the Pacmans and his family receive a knockout welcome reception. Flanking him from left are his father Rosalio, wife Jinky and mother Dionisia.

Politicians ride on Pacquiao mania

By Christine O. Avendaño, Tarra V. Quismundo and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FOR A MOMENT YESTERDAY, PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo and Manny Pacquiao seemed to have reversed their roles, he sounding like a politician and she acting like a boxing sensation.

Indeed, Malacañang turned into a unique arena where the worlds of boxing and politics met.

Magsaysay said the P544 million taken from the PCS billion in the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos' Swiss bank deposits for the DA Gintong Ani Magsasaka Ani (GMA) hybrid rice program would have been better spent by the Department of Agrarian Reform, which was in dire need of funds for the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

"They shouldn't have touched that,"

MARCOS, A6

Marcos loot suspected used in polls

By Philip C. Tabeza

THE RECOVERED MARCOS MONEY should not have been used for the Department of Agriculture's farm input program because not one farmer organization has come forward to say it received fertilizer from the program, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. said yesterday.

Left-Right alliance vs GMA confirmed

By Norman Bordadora and Luige A. del Puerco

A MILITANT PARTY-LIST REPRESentative and a military-political analyst linked to coup-attempts in the late 1980s confirmed yesterday the reported link-up between the Left and military rebels in a campaign to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Disgruntled officers of the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police are reaching out to people's organizations to get support for their grievances," Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño told reporters at the weekly Kapihan sa Newsdesk in Quezon City.

Casiño said that as in the ouster of Presidents Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada in 1986 and 2001, the military's withdrawal of support would be "crucial" to the removal of Ms Arroyo from power.

"But their exact role in her ouster will be determined, to a large extent, by what the people's movement can accept," the lawmaker said.

At the same forum, retired Navy Commodore Ret. Rolex said it was "natural" for the Left and the Right to confer with each other, "especially because they were once together in detention."

He was referring to the time in the 1980s when coup plotters

LEFT-RIGHT, A6

JDV heads 1st Asia-Pacific centrist party

GETTING TO KNOW YOU: Centrist Democrat Int'l launches its 1st organization for the Asia-Pacific region. From left, ex-PM of Spain and CDI president Jose Aznar, Ms Arroyo, Ramos, De Venecia and Thai deputy PM Suvarnart.

By Michael Lim Ubac

TAKING WHAT THEY SAID WAS a first step toward political and economic integration in Asia, parliamentary leaders from Europe and Asia yesterday signed a declaration establishing a regional Asia-Pacific unit of the Centrist Democrat International and elected Speaker Jose de Venecia its first president.

The accord binds all member parties or end conflicts in the region through interfaith dialogues, peace talks, creation of an Asian bond to end poverty and harnessing the role of political parties as instruments of development.

De Venecia said the Manila declaration was the "first step" toward a European Union-type of

JDV HEADS, A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

RP to bring custody issue to Condi

A SENIOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL YESTERDAY said the custody issue over the four United States Marines in the Subic rape case could reach "higher" official levels in the US "very soon."

The highest US authority that would tackle the issue would be Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

But Rafael Seguis, the foreign undersecretary for special concerns, would not say what specific steps the Department of Foreign Affairs would be taking if and when it decides to bring the matter up with Rice.

Seguis said negotiations for the transfer of custody of the soldiers to the Philippines were going through formal and informal talks even after Washington decided on earlier request.

Seguis, who stood in for Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo at a press conference yesterday, read from a statement of Romulo who said the custody issue was being prioritized only "in the spirit of mutual interest and dialogue."

Among the formal channels being pursued was the issuance by the DFA of another diplomatic note a day after the Jan. 10 reply from the US declining the Philippine request for custody, Seguis said.

The Jan. 17 note stirred controversy since the Philippine view on "the unconditional nature of the case" and thus, the request for custody.

Washington has yet to respond to the DFA's latest diplomatic note.

Seguis said Romulo's meeting in Washington two weeks ago with US. John, a deputy assistant of the US State Department, was part of the "informal channels."

Washington has invoked the Visiting Forces Agreement in taking custody of the soldiers who are charged with raping a Filipino woman in November while on leave after taking part in joint military exercises at the former US naval base of Subic Bay.

The VFA, which was signed in 1998, gives protection to visiting US troops accused of crimes while taking part in joint military exercises.

Seguis said the US Embassy had been amply warned of the likely resentful anger among Filipinos over the Subic rape case and the continuing dispute over custody.

"We told them about the public outrage and the congressional outrage and they said they are aware of that," he said.

Seguis said the DFA negotiating team that included himself had met with a US Embassy panel led by charge d' affaires Paul Jones.

The highly charged rape case has drawn widespread interest in the country. On Thursday a small group of protesters hurled an American flag outside the US Embassy to protest Washington's refusal to hand over the four.

The Senate and the House of Representatives have passed a concurrent resolution urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to terminate the VFA and renegotiate the terms of the accord.

Yesterday, the Senth Gendaan provincial government withdrew its invitation to a small group of US troops taking part in ongoing joint military exercises in south-ern Mindanao.

Isiah Tandaan Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said his provincial board urged the President to "immediately suspend" the month-long exercises that began in the province in mid-January unless the four accused were placed in Philippine custody.

In his statement, Romulo said government officials "understand and respect the intensity of the sentiments of some members of Philippine society on this issue."

He said the DFA "respects" the views of Congress but rejected the idea of Congress not signing the VFA.

Nikko Dizon, Norman Jauquin, Will Conrad Laron Dirk and AFP

Group laments UP refusal to host prayer rally

By Christian V. Esguerra

LONG CONSIDERED A BASTION of freedom of expression, the University of the Philippines has barred the holding of a prayer rally after indicating earlier it had no problem having the affair there, one of the rally's organizers said yesterday.

Fr. Robert Reyes, spokesperson of the Ghost Majority Prayer Movement, said the interfaith rally would be held on Monday at the Quezon Memorial Circle instead of the UP Sunken Garden as earlier planned in view of the state university's decision to turn down the group's request.

Reyes, a UP chaplain, for seven years until 2002, said the decision was conveyed to the organizers hours after the movement was officially launched last Thursday.

But last Tuesday, he said, UP president Emerlinda Roman told him that the request would be endorsed to chancellor Sergio Cao. Is and that it was as good as approved. Quoting Roman, he said only a "conflict in schedule" would keep the entertainment from the venue.

"A UP Diliman commitment with Malacañang pansamid" he added in an interview with the reporters. "Deep and genuine prayer is needed to heal all kinds of maladies, from corruption to paranoia."

Contacted for comment yesterday, Roman denied she had assured Reyes that the request was "as good as approved."

"No, that's not true, I did not say that," Roman told the reporter. "I told him the use of the Sunken Garden is a decision that has to be made by the chancellor. It is the chancellor that makes the decision. I don't make the decision."

The movement, which is led by Linggayon Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, said in a statement that it organized the prayer rally to encourage Filipinos to "pray for our deliverance from the social evils in our midst, the divisions we experience, the misery we live in."

The group said it was time to implore the heavens for a genuine revolution in the entire system governed by President Macapagal-Arroyo's alleged manipulations of the 2004 election results.

Reyes said the UP administration turned down the movement's request, citing an obscure, 13-year-old administrative order issued by former chancellor Rogen Posadas.

The rule, in essence, prescribes that nowhere in UP can a religious activity be held outside of the two churches on campus—the Protestant Church of the Risen Lord and the Catholic Parish of the Holy Sacrifice—Reyes said.

"In my seven years as UP chaplain, we never had problems like this," the priest lamented. *With a report from Ed Top*

NEWSBRIEFS

SC junks Garcia's petition

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY JUNKED FORMER MAJ. GEN. CARLOS Garcia's petition questioning the jurisdiction of the Sandiganbayan over the former two-star general over his alleged plunder involving more than P140 million in kickbacks worth. The ruling, in effect, paved the way for the anti-graft court to start hearings on the forfeiture case filed by the Office of the Ombudsman against Garcia last year. In a three-page ruling, the SC said the Sandiganbayan did not commit grave abuse of discretion when it denied Garcia's appeal to dismiss the case. *Arnaud B. Rosario*

TRO stops Pinky custody case hearing

MALOLOS CITY – THE COURT OF APPEALS IN CEBU CITY HAS ISSUED A 60-day temporary restraining order stopping Regional Trial Court Judge Hensy Tracboc from hearing a custody case filed by the former lawyer-partner of Misamis oriental Rep. Antonio "Pinky" Calixto against the latter. The CA, in a ruling Thursday, also prevented Tracboc from implementing a ruling within 200 meters of her, according to lawyer Vitaliano Bagtipas, the CA's legal counsel.

Bagtipas former boss, a Magnanam businessman, however just consigned getting the ruling. "I don't care even if it reaches a thousand years. What is important is that the CA allowed my case to continue to stay with me in his personal home in Barangay Ginat, Pandamatica, which he owns, so I can order him to have lunch and a bath. That's all that matters to me," the former vice-cast Thursday. *Carlos P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Atienza cleared of graft

THE SUPREME COURT HAS CLEARED MANILA CITY MAYOR LITO Atienza of graft charges arising from a P30,000 "financial assistance" he gave to a bus supply captain and his convict five years ago, in a decision by Associate Justice Leonardo de Castro ending. The high court affirmed a 2002 ruling of the Office of the Ombudsman stating that there was no ground for the filing of a graft case against Atienza. Complainant Armando Velasquez, a Manila city hall employee, claimed Atienza later refunded the amount from the coffers of the city government, a move he said was not justified as a lawful expense under the anti-graft and corrupt practices act or in the 2004 of the Revised Penal Code. "We hold that the petition lacks merit. No grave abuse of discretion is attributable to the Ombudsman. *Arnaud B. Rosario*

Sandigan junks graft case vs Puno

THE SANDIGANBAYAN FOURTH DIVISION HAS JUNKED IN TOTALITY a graft case filed against Antipolo City Rep. Rolando Puno in connection with the P728 million Mabuhay Satellite deal which he received in 1998. In a 38-page resolution dated Jan. 20, the anti-graft court denied the prosecution's April 22, 2005 motion for reconsideration for lack of merit. State prosecutors accused Puno of causing injury to the government, the Philippine National Police, Motorola and its local distributors when, as interior undersecretary, he recalled his approval of Phase II and III of the PNP Multi-Trunk Radio System (MRTS) project. The ex-prosecutors claimed that Motorola issued bid bond when according to RA 23 million was in its treasury then. *Dennis Jay Santos/PDI trainee in correspondence*

Aaron V. Torres

PROPERTY

Developers assure homebuyers of consistently safe homes

By Tessa R. Salazar

HAVE CONDO UNIT buyers or house hunters ever crossed their mind that as developers' boom to fill up the demand, some building processes are being compromised, especially in the aspect of building safety?

Builders, of course, are quick to say this isn't the case.

Safety standards

"While developers scurry to fill up this demand, building practices, especially safety aspects, still never be compromised," said BRA Philippines property president and CEO Eric Recimes. BRA is a real estate consulting firm, whose parent company is based in Singapore. Its local clientele includes Megaworld Properties.

Recimes stressed that strict implementation and adherence to the provisions of various national and local building codes ensures developers' compliance to safety standards. Buyers are assured of quality products delivered on time and built to specifications.

"I do not believe this is happening as there are still the safeguards promulgated by the Building Code as well as HLURB rules and regulations which protect the buying public," said Marites Altamirano, vice president and head of Ayala Land Inc.'s Leisure and Lifestyle consultancy firm.

She added that the real estate industry would be to execute not just a commitment out of regulations but customer satisfaction as well.

Assurance

Basilio E. Ignacio, general manager for Robinsons Land Corp.'s high-rise buildings division, assures occupants of RLC development that they could sleep in peace every night.

"Established developers, such as Robinsons Land Corp., are committed to complying with the Building Code to ensure safety and structural integrity of the buildings," he said.

Asked what structures would be in demand in the year, developers are hard put to choose one. Instead, they say vertical and horizontal developments would be valued.

Altamirano said that both would be in demand as there seems to be no distinct trend emerging favoring one form of development over the other.

"What is more striking," she said, "is the differences in price points, as of course the more affordable units, whether horizontal or vertical, are sold at a faster rate. The high-end/medium continuum to be a stable niche for Ayala Land Inc., however."

Ignacio agreed that horizontal and vertical developments would continue to enjoy robust demands.

Vertical is 'in'

Sadness, however, stressed that vertical developments would be more in demand this year as most of the horizontal developments are far from the cities.

With rising land costs, he explained, people understand the need to live within the city and the only viable and affordable options are condominiums. "After all, not OFWs are quite familiar with condo living, having been exposed to world-class communities in foreign shores," he said.

Last few residential lots at Laguna BelAir South Drive

WHEN IT COMES TO INVESTING in real estate, middle-income families are more discriminating than ever. And one oft-important consideration is how much freedom they have to design and build their dream home.

For leading township developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc., giving home buyers what they want has proved to be a sound idea. Demand has been strong for choice residential lots at its Laguna BelAir South Drive, which allows for buyers the opportunity to construct an award-winning home according to their requirements.

Launched in September 2003, Laguna BelAir South Drive offers residential lots ranging from 132 to 277 square meters. In barely four months, the project is 90 percent sold, with only eight out of 87 lots remaining.

Located in Laguna Bel-Air 23, Phase 3, in front of the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay National Highway, Laguna BelAir South Drive is set for completion by 2007.

First-class facilities

Contributing to the project's rising market appeal is the existing array of first-class facilities to be found in Laguna Bel-Air, the most successful township south of Manila.

Just across the site is the Mother of Perpetual Help Parish Church, along with a row of specialty shops, restaurants and cafés. Also nearby are the Laguna BelAir School and a recreational complex featuring a clubhouse with gym and badminton court, a swimming pool, basketball-tennis-volleyball courts and children's playground.

Prime location

With the project's prime location, residents can reach Makati and Alabang via the South Luzon Expressway and Metro Manila Skyway in less than an hour. And close to home are top economic zones such as the Laguna Technopark, Canlubang Industrial Park and the Light Industry and Science Park 1—within the manufacturing islands of Province and Gateway, Pulong Sta. Cruz-Cabuyao.

Equally accessible are the Southern Luzon Hospital and Medical Center, Paseo de Santa Rosa Mall and schools such as Don Bosco, De La Salle Canlubang and the upcoming University of Santo Tomas-Cabuyao.

For more information on how you can make your Americana-inspired dream home a reality at Laguna BelAir South Drive, call 867-4937 to 42.

Holganza groomed as new PSG chief

THE ARMED FORCES BOARD OF Generals (BOG) has recommended Army Col. Carlos Holganza, a former military aide of President Macapagal-Arroyo, as the next chief of the Presidential Security Group.

Holganza, who is currently senior military assistant to Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., was reportedly endorsed by outgoing PSG chief Brig. Gen. Leo Ferrer.

Holganza served as senior military adviser and aide to Ms Arroyo when she was vice president.

He belongs to the Philippine Military Academy Class 1979 which adopted Ms Arroyo as an honorary member.

After Arroyo assumed office with the ouster of then President Joseph Estrada in January 2001, Holganza served as special assistant to the President.

He later served as deputy executive director of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission. — Jerna Z. Pasadilagyon

HONORING DOY

The city of Manila honors the memory of the late Vice President Salvador Laurel with the unveiling earlier this afternoon of a statue in front of the Laurel Foundation building on Padre Gil corner Roxas Boulevard in Manila. Cielo Diaz Laurel and son Corey (adult and little boy on left) lead the family in song. The former lawmaker/diplomat and senator, who led the opposition during the darkest days of martial law, died on Jan. 27, 2006 while undergoing treatment for cancer in the US.

NGO raises alarm as deadline nears for landfill closure

By Blanche Rivera and David Hayes

IMAGINE 20 OLYMPIC-SIZED pools of water oozing out of the garbage collected from the entire Metro Manila.

That is the volume of liquid waste produced by the Rodriguez landfill in Rizal province which generates 65 million liters of leachate every year from Metro Manila's garbage, the Ecological Waste Coalition (Ecowaste)—environmental group said yesterday.

ADB study

Citing a study by the Asian Development Bank, the Ecowaste Coalition said the waste from the Rodriguez landfill eventually flows out into the Marikina River, which is one of the freshwater environments encroached.

"Sometimes, the effluent comes out visibly because the waste water treatment facility of the landfill cannot treat heavy metals. It's made for leachate from organic wastes," Ecowaste president Eileen Sison told a forum yesterday.

Leachate is the solution that is formed when water passes through wastes collected in a landfill site. Depending on the characteristics of the wastes being treated, the leachate may contain high levels of pollutants and hazardous substances that can enter surface and ground waters, or the soil.

Unlike open garbage dumps, landfills are kept carefully engineered facilities into which wastes are put. A secure landfill would be lined with clay and plastic to prevent the possibility of wastes escaping to groundwaters. It would have a wastewater treatment facility for the leachate, a soil cover and a gas pipes to collect the methane emissions.

5,000 tons of garbage

Most landfills like that of Rodriguez, which receives about 5,000 tons of garbage from Metro Manila each day, are capable of treating only leachate from organic wastes.

But Sison said the Rodriguez landfill has become a dumping ground for mixed garbage, causing toxic wastes from batteries and other hazardous materials to contaminate the leachate.

Ecowaste, an alliance of individuals, community and civil society organizations, has raised the alarm over the Rodriguez landfill as the 6th, 30 deadline nears for all open dumpsites to be closed or converted to sanitary landfills.

It said local governments, including those of Metro Manila, still have a long way to go toward organizing themselves to segregate garbage so that only organic wastes end up in the landfills.

Apart from the Rodriguez landfill which is the only one in Metro Manila, the country has only four other landfills that are near leachate from organic wastes—Puerto Princesa in Palawan, Iloilo in Region Occidental, Cebu in Barangay and San Fernando in La Union.

996 dumps

Ecowaste has called on the government to close 996 waste dumpsites all over the country to comply with RA 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, which has an Feb. 15 as the deadline for all dumps to be closed or converted to sanitary landfills.

Data from the National Solid Waste Commission show that 734 open dumps and 262 controlled dumps (those that are provided with soil cover) continue to operate throughout the country despite the deadline for open dumps to be converted into controlled dumps having lapsed two years ago.

2006 deadline

RA 9003 requires open dump sites to be converted into controlled dump sites by 2003 and for the closure of these converted dump sites by February 2006.

"I dare see the government or DENR being able to compel the local governments to follow the law because the NSWMC is only sitting on the budget of the Environmental Management Bureau, and there's not much it can do," Sison said.

RA 9003 also requires local governors to build materials recovery facilities for residual non-biodegradable garbage in each barangay or cluster of barangays, but only 1,340 of the country's 42,000 barangays have these facilities.

The NSWMC said it has served notice that it would use 25 local governments for their failure to segregate. Solid materials recovery facilities and operate controlled dumpsites or sanitary landfills as mandated by RA 9003.

Maligalig named new PMA chief

By Dona Z. Pasalogon

BRIG. GEN. LEOPOLDO MALIGALIG has been named the new superintendent of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

The 52-year-old Maligalig, a member of the PMA Class 1976, will replace Lt. Gen. Ernesto Bolasting, who is set to retire on Jan. 30.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga yesterday announced the appointment of Maligalig, whom he expects to start implementing the academy's reform program dubbed the "PMA Road Map 2015."

"He will have more than two years before retirement and therefore [could] ensure the implementation of this plan in its very crucial initial three-year stage," said Senga.

There have been calls for reforms in the academy due to reports of hazing and frustrated resignations.

Prior to his appointment as PMA superintendent, Maligalig served as commandant of the academy's cadet corps.

He had previously served as spokesman for both the Armed Forces and the Philippine Army.

"I think the reason I was chosen is [for] neither by," Maligalig said when reached for comment.

He will be promoted to the two-star rank of major general, according to Senga.

He is a brother of retired Navy Capt. Ferguson Maligalig, the spokesperson of the Saturday-morning Mystasing Rebellion.

The Philippine Military Academy was formally created on Dec. 21, 1905 by Commonwealth Act No. 1 (National Defense Act) which authorized it to bestow a Bachelor of Science degree or graduate of its four-year course. With Cpnl. L. Strawhecker, PSI Bismarck.

YAKUZA LINKS

2 Pinoys arrested in Japan; bombs, guns, ammo seized

TOKYO — POLICE ON PEDAY ARRESTED three men and raided the offices of a crime syndicate on suspicion of smuggling explosives, guns and ammunition into Japan, a news report said.

The men, one Japanese and two Filipinos, are suspected of bringing plastic explosives, 10 automatic revolvers and about 200 rounds of live ammunition to Japan on a Philippines-registered ship earlier this month, Kyodo News agency reported.

The weapons were seized at Yokohama port last week. Investigators believe the men from Yokuza the Inagawa-kai, a major crime syndicate based outside Tokyo, to smuggle the arms.

The Inagawa-kai may be preparing for a power struggle with rival gangs, public broadcaster NHK quoted police as saying Friday. An official at the National Police Agency said he could not comment on the reports.

Japanese gangsters — commonly called the yakuza — are among the world's wealthiest, bringing in billions of dollars a year from extortion, gambling, the sex industry, guns, drugs, and real estate and construction kickbacks schemes.

Gangster numbers have been growing despite decades of police crackdowns, with 87,300 gangsters in the country at the end of last year, according to NPA figures.

Of those, some 7% percent are thought to have links with Japan's three largest syndicates — Yamaguchi-gumi, Sumiyoshi-kai and Inagawa-kai — which have pushed into control of Japan's underworld.

In 2005, two gunmen opened fire in a bar in north of Tokyo in an reportedly violent dispute involving the Sumiyoshi and Inagawa groups, killing a mobster and three bystanders. AP

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Peace within grasp, GMA tells 'centrist democrats'

DESPITE COUP RUMORS HOG the lingering political crisis, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday claimed before world leaders gathered at the Manila Hotel here that peace within grasp."

In a veiled warning to coup plotters, Ms Arroyo said the Philippines would continue to be governed by the politics espoused by "centrist democrats."

She said the country was "a centrist nation with a centrist government" that could "defeat poverty and terrorism" mankind's greatest enemies.

Speaker Jose de Venecia told the banquet that the presence in Manila of European and Asian leaders of parliaments and leading members of the world's great religions signified the continued support of the international community to the Arroyo administration. (See story on Page A11)

"Despite coup rumors, the international community is here," De Venecia said. "In a sense, we are proud of our national party, Lakas-CMD, perhaps one of the very few parties in the world that honors Christians and Muslims under one roof in a common political banner."

In his address, President Fidel Ramos urged the people to "help maintain it (centrism), any coup attempt against the democratic institution is bound to fail if it lacks the quick fear will trigger nationwide outrage against her.

Speaking with reporters on the sidelines of the same assembly, Ramos said the coup plotters, including the fugitive Magdalo mutineers, were doing the country a disservice by espousing violence and creating many potential for unrest and even domestic insurgency.

He expressed the belief that the reasons for discontent among those wanting to remove the President were not enough to convince the people to put their lives on the line.

"Why should we risk another bloody struggle among soldiers and politicians when the causes on which they're basing their plans, rumors, and declarations are not reasonable to us-sure?"Reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Philip C. Tubeza and Cynthia D. Balana

Left-Right alliance vs GMA confirmed

From page A1

shared detention facilities with suspected members of the Communist Party.

Some of those personalities include former Sen. Gregorio Honasan who, as an army colonel, led coup attempts against the Aquino administration, and Hapee Mama Rep. Satur Ocampo, then a member of the National Democratic Front panel negotiating peace with the government.

"The government should look into the reasons why the Left and Right are coming together. If you remove the ideology, you will see that the agenda is the same—the search for a good life," Robles said.

Meeting of minds

Castro said that to the end, "a meeting of minds between the military and the civilian component of the coup As-sayo movement" would be necessary.

"Will it be an Aklas I or Aklas II model? Or will there be a hybrid? This is something that cannot be predetermined and will be defined by political develop-

ments in the next few months," he said.

Castro added that a successful coordination between the Left and the Right in toppling the Arroyo administration could even result in hastening the peace process between the government and the NDF.

"If [Ms Arroyo] gets booted out, it could create conditions that will make it easier to resolve the armed conflict," he said. "In the field, this can mean that the communist rebels would not disturb the commercial New People's Army.

A government intelligence report has also alleged that Honasan was in touch with Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, a Magdalo leader still behind bars, and 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, a few days before he and fifteen other Magdalo mutineers escaped from detention.

"Definitely we're looking into [Honasan's supposed links with rebel officers], but I don't want to implicate [him] this early without real proof," his brother Senator Aquilino Pimentel Gonzales said yesterday.

He added: "We have to check that information as soon as possible because we are not discounting his Honasan's] influence in the military."

Recruitment at PNP

At Camp Crame, two PNP officers disclosed that parties seeking Mr Honasan's course approached police commanders as early as the middle of 2005, offering in at least one case a large amount of money in exchange for switching loyalties.

The targets for recruitment reportedly included officers of the PNP Special Action Force by virtue of its big number of men trained for combat and the wealth of information they keep.

But the recruiters were "rebuffed," according to a junior officer.

Civilians with ties to politicians also tried to recruit intelligence officers, said another source.

One officer was offered "a very big amount of cash," but he "felt insulted" and instead to down, the source said.

Both sources, who work in sensitive PNP units, spoke on condition of anonymity because they did not want themselves, their units and sources exposed.

One cold in the PNP Texas was aware of the recruitment efforts, although additional details had been issued.

A lot of cash

According to the sources, those seeking to destabilize the administration supposedly resorted to a lot of cash and some tempting perks—not with gripes, including the inability, for one reason or another, to get desired posts in the PNP.

"What I can say is that they [coup plotters] have the money but lack the means at this time," the junior officer told the Inquirer. With reports from Jill C. Cabanlong-on A1

Marcos loot suspected used in polls

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said Magsaysay chair of the Senate committee on agriculture and food, which is investigating the DBM's hybrid projects.

"The law says that the funds should go to agrarian reform, and that the DBM should implement it. The DAR is in need of funds for the acquisition of land for agrarian reform beneficiaries," he said.

Magsaysay said the P644 million—which was released weeks before the May 2004 elections—became part of the total P1.606 billion "fertilizer fund" of the DA.

Cayetano said that the fund never reached its farmer-beneficiaries and was used to induce public officials to support President Macapagal-Arroyo's candidacy and ensure her victory in an election the money was distributed.

But Senate panel yesterday over dole, Cardin, Cayetano, Secretary Nasser Pangandaman said that while he did not know the details on how the Marcos fund was used, he was certain that the DA had used the money in a proper way.

"I don't think it's right to say immediately that the money was used for the election," he said, adding it was "obvious" that critics were using the issue "to allegedly steal of the administration and President Arroyo."

Pimentel appealed for people to be reasonable and not rush to make accusations.

Asked if the Palace was ready to reply to the charge, Ermita said he expected the DA to address the issue.

He lamented that "all things" were "being given political color," so that "instead of progressing, we tend to be immersed in such talk."

No 'fertilizer assistance'

Of the P644 million released, P394 million went to the hybrid rice program of the Philippine Rice Research Institute, P50 million for farm-to-market roads, and P100 million for "farm inputs and implements."

But Magsaysay said his committee had held five public hearings since last year, and "not a single farmer organization had acknowledged receipt of 'fertilizer assistance.'"

Instead, according to a preliminary report of Magsaysay's committee that was released last month, representatives of farmer organizations who attended the hearings wondered why the funds were released in June. February to May—the harvest season or gapsan months—when fertilizers "are of no use, because during these is December."

The report said that until the DA submitted "substantial and convincing evidence to the contrary," the committee would continue to believe that the money was "ill utilized to assure the victory of the administration in the electoral polls of 2004."

Gross disproportion

The report cited a document prepared by GMA Rice Program rep ullers Jesus Mahilumsen, which said that for the year 2003, the amount of fertilizer fund unwarrantably was only P38 million.

"If the amount is accurately verified and adopted and updated for 2004, adjustments can be made, but it will not be as costly as P2.606 billion, or a hundred times the needed amount," it said.

"This is a classic case of gross disproportion between what is needed by the farmers and what is released and the amount wastefully actual release of fund to support the cause," it added.

The report also said that 26 months after the funds were released, "no delivery of fertilizer has been verified and validated, and no substantial documentation and auditing have been completed."

"While indeed the auditing mandate is being performed by the [Commission on Audit], the DA has not been cooperating and, in fact, maintains an indifferent stance," it said.

It pointed out that "judging from the inaction, ... it may be concluded that there is no real intention to liquidate the fund because it may be that the project is a ghost project involving big time crooks in the government, or may have been padded because of excessive pricing."

Thorough auditing

In a statement, Arroyo's flag bitty Ermita said he's "thoroughly auditing" by the COA of "the 18-person Marcos wealth that was transferred between April and July 1998 from the Swiss banks to the Philippine National Bank to the tune of $140.6 million."

"The said Congress should also do its part in the ongoing 'withdrawals-up.'

"Should it be makes money that should go to the Marcos victims and the farmers, be missing, then the full force of the law must be used on the culpable, whatever her/his position in public office," Ermita said. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Alexis Pupa

JDV heads ...

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integration of Asian nations into a "continental community without dividing lines."

"We are sure that we can take this first step together on our journey toward an Asian People's Party, creating the beginnings of what could be the first regional transnational political party in Asia," De Venecia said in his welcome address.

The accord also regards "the use of terror for political and military means as serious crime against humanity" and calls for cooperation to combating transnational crime such as money laundering, drug trafficking and human trafficking.

The signing was witnessed by President Macapagal-Arroyo and former President Fidel Ramos at the Manila Hotel. Both addressed EPP officials who converged in Manila for a three-day executive committee meeting, including an interfaith dialogue.

110 political parties

Previously called Christian Democratic International, CDI is composed of 110 political parties from around the world. It is the sister party of Gerhard Schroeder's former head of the European People's Party, currently the majority party in the European Parliament. It is pushing hard to spread its center-right philosophy to the East.

The Philippines' ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and nine other political parties in Asia are leading the organization.

De Venecia, who initiated the formation of CDI Asia-Pacific, was elected its first president by 10 Asian political parties and a similar unit of parliamentary leaders from Europe, birthplace of the socialist ideology. That Prime Minister Thorbjorn Jagland, who was represented by a deputy, was elected chair.

Apart from former Spanish Premier Jose Maria Aznar, the CDI's international president, other foreign dignitaries attending the meeting were two other former prime ministers, Wilfried Martens of Belgium and Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway, and Alessandro Cortesi, Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and president of the Inter Parliamentary Union.

Antidote to terrorism

Speaking at the interfaith dialogue afternoon, Ms Aznar, chair of the Lakas-CMD, said faith was the "greatest antidote" to terrorism. "We must look for progress in her administration's peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front which will resume later this month in Malaysia.

"I am happy to report to you today ... that in the Philippines the energies of conflict in Mindanao are finally fading away," she said. She said that through the peace talks the government had demonstrated "a willingness to accept the sincerity of those who differ with us in faith."

Ms Arroyo said that religious faith should be a "source of individual strength and a humanizing element that binds together all the peoples of the world" but that instead the "true virtue" faith has become a "source of disunity and destruction among peoples and nations."

"I believe what we're doing here today is every bit as important as building up might, military forces in fight terrorism and isolation here at home or across the globe," she added.

India's experience

In his speech, De Venecia cited India's experience in interfaith dialogue.

"I look at India as a model and a great example for its political leaders, Sonia Gandhi, is a Roman Catholic. Their Speaker of parliament is a leading Communist. And the country in 82 percent or 83 percent Hindu. As in credible pluralist society, the largest democracy in the world?" he said.

Asia "is home not only to the fastest growing economies but also to the rising powers," De Venecia said, pointing to the rise of Japan, China and India. "Asia is the only region in the world made by other countries to the region. "All these are combining to shift the weight of global power from West to East," he added.

"For us—as for the Christian Democratic founders of our Europe—the vision of a united west without dividing lines has become conceivable chance. We believe the emergence of Asia will keep in balance the tripod of global interdependence, where two other legs are Europe and America," he said.

Grand union

Even now, he said that heads of government were negotiating an "East Asian economic grouping" that would incorporate the 10 Southeast Asian states already partnered in Asean with the Northeast Asian states of China, Japan and South Korea.

The initial phase of the "grand scheme"—a free trade area involving Asean with China—began last year, and should be completed by 2010, he said.

Elected vice presidents of CDI Asia-Pacific were Thai Deputy Prime Minister Sanitsuda of Wan Noi Thai, Deputy Prime Minister Sok An of the Cambodian People's Party; Sen. Mushahid Hussain Sayed, secretary general of the Pakistan Muslim League; Thee Sian-hoaga, deputy chair of Indonesia's Golkar party, and Prince Ranariddh, president of the Cambodian parliament and Penetapet party.

Green architecture and postdisaster reconstruction

NATURAL HAZARDS SUCH AS EARTHquakes, floods, landslides and even volcanic eruptions have one thing in common. They cause significant damage to society in terms of loss of life and property, not to mention compromising the environment. The recent tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the earthquake in Indonesia and the hurricane in New Orleans are but a few examples that attest to this fact.

The devastation brought about by these natural hazards has caused extensive reconstruction. Understanding the nature and extent posed by a disaster is vital in determining the kind of inputs needed for the postdisaster reconstruction.

What is postdisaster reconstruction?

It is a form of development that aims to raise the standard of living higher than what existed before the disaster. This generally not only building shelters but also restoring the social, cultural and economic structures to ensure the sustainability of the community.

Relief mentality

In many infamity sites worldwide, some organizations and government agencies involved in reconstruction have developed what is called the "relief mentality" in their desire to uplift the conditions in the affected areas they rush reconstruction efforts while completely disregarding the economic and needs of the affected people.

They build new and even of identical houses with designs that have little to do with the way people lived before the disaster. Instead of pedestrian-scaled walkways and communal spaces, houses are often built. Materials from distant places are used and some of the local tradesmen are employed or consulted to build the shelters. In some cases the materials are not appropriate to build without subsidy or financial assistance.

Another problem is the cognitive education of the inhabitants affected. So-called "experts" declare that the area is not safe for habitation. They also declare that the inhabitants should live far from the disaster prone area.

In other cases, temporary shelters are badly and hastily built to provide immediate relief to the inhabitants. This means cheap structures made of inferior building materials that do not last very long or are inefficient and expensive to maintain. Eventually the shelters fall apart and the quality of life in the area besides them. Finally, the people abandon their newly built homes, which cost so much just to return to their old damaged ones.

This concept of temporary shelters is now being rejected by some actors since they see that "temporary" shelters have a way of becoming permanent structures.

To avoid many of these problems, recent events have brought about the development of green and sustainable guidelines for a successful postdisaster reconstruction. Some of these are the following:

• Local expertise. Before using imported skills and materials, effort must be made to check the availability of locally available expertise and building material within the community. This will ensure that an indigenous and therefore a familiar form of architecture will be built. This will also reinforce the technical capability of the local workforce for reconstruction.

• Community involvement. There should be a system that will allow the inhabitants to get involved in shaping their community based on their needs with the assistance of technical and material support. This can be done through a reconstruction committee in the village level. It has been shown that taking the people's needs into consideration and getting them involved in the process have brought about successful reconstruction.

• Uniform policies. By establishing uniform policies and standards, an equitable distribution of financial and material resources should be provided for all the inhabitants regardless of their social, religious and political inclinations. This can reduce possible conflicts in case land and encourage more cooperation for the good of the reconstruction efforts, on the other hand.

• Subsidies. Many reconstruction projects require massive relocation of entire villages. This option seldom works. Massive relocation has often means dislocation and discrimination by many of the affected populations. What is preferred instead is selective relocation of parts of the community away from danger zones but remaining in the same general area. If relocation is found to be really necessary, it is important that the affected population be consulted and provided with feasible entitlement choices.

Design, construction practices

The development phase of the reconstruction provides the positive opportunity to assess and study how models of houses can be made on existing designs of buildings, especially of houses, so that they are earthquake resistant or typhoon-resistant, economical and culturally adapted to the locality. The study can also include availability of local materials and craftsmen and workers can be involved in the reconstruction.

For earthquake-prone areas, concrete dwellings should have solid foundations, strong walls connected to each other and lightweight roofing materials. Cylindrical- or A-shaped dwellings are also strong structures against earthquakes.

• Linkages. It is also during this phase that important linkages are established that can help in the reconstruction efforts, whether they are government agencies, or nongovernment organizations (NGO) groups.

• Transition period. The normal urge is rush and bring human relief has brought about costly mistakes in the past. What is important is for people to settle into houses that are secure and resistant to future disasters.

A HOUSE, house by Habitat for Humanity features a six-at-quarry building system for the reconstruction efforts in the hurricane-struck region.

What they really need

A very significant finding regarding the needs of the affected population is that they do not need houses as much as the restoration of the economic infrastructure. They are more concerned with restoring their source of livelihood rather than assistance in the construction of new houses. Once they are economically strong they can be more active participants in the reconstruction process.

The ongoing reconstruction efforts in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina (with property damage estimated at $75 billion) provide a most challenging undertaking even for a country as rich and powerful as America. The planning process has been deeply hampered by the enormous size of the disaster. Many still wonder how New Orleans was a better place to live and work.

How well can we cope with a similar disaster? Perhaps this is a good time for our country to develop an efficient and appropriate disaster-preparedness plan. After all we are ranked yearly by more than a dozen typhoons.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadeodefranz@gmail.com.

Crown Asia's Mille Luce: living in sensible luxury

THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER YEAR IS the perfect opportunity to start building a comfortable and serene future for your family, and the time to reap life's rewards from last year's labor. But acquiring a beautiful life for your family entails greater lengths of time spent on hard work and wise choices coupled with suitable investments.

After celebrating 10 years of a firm's share of sold out success, the country's biggest home builder Crown Asia is all set for its next golden decade. With the expertise of creating enclaves of timeless designs and ingenious architecture, Crown Asia delivers yet another residential community of notable luxury— Mille Luce at Antipolo, Rizal.

Mille Luce's (meaning "a thousand lights") breathtaking location on the ground and highest point of Antipolo makes it a "haven" between the stars and city lights. A quick drive home from a tiring day at the workplace becomes a relaxing experience as thriving hilltops and landscaped surroundings greet you.

During the daytime, a stopping by crossroad with a lateral peek at Mille Luce allows a view of Metro Manila's skyline and Laguna de Bay. Once the sun sets, residents can take advantage of Antipolo's altitude to get a glimpse of the vibrant metropolitan lights which look like a thousand stars.

Mille Luce's quaint neighborhood layout is more ideal for raising a family with its serene site, expansive architect where children can frolic, common cool breeze and the rare treat of breathing in fresh air without having to leave the manor.

The Italian-inspired selection of model homes at Mille Luce provides the height of living at sensible costs.

• Portia. With maximized living space on a minimum of 86 square meter lot, the Portia suits young couple's wishing to begin a new life. It has three bedrooms, two toilet and baths, living and dining areas, kitchen, maid and carport.

THE LIVING room's comfortable design and wide windows allow residents to enjoy the constant sunshine at Mille Luce.

• Sophia. The distinct design of the Sophia units greeting families with a minimum lot area of 95 sq m. It has three bedrooms, three toilets and baths, living room, dining room, spacious kitchen, balcony, lanai, carport and maid's room. The Sophia's tower design provides the master's bedroom with space for a sitting area with wide windows.

• Divine. With luxurious designs accentuating the downhill contours of Antipolo, the Divine houses of a substantial ceiling of functional pathways with better ventilation, distinct details and a sense of flowing space with its "open below" feature. It has a maximum lot area of 108 sq m with a master's bedroom with ensuite walk-in closet and toilet and bath, two bedrooms, two toilets and baths, spacious dining and living areas, kitchen, balcony, lanai, porch, carport and maid's room with toilet and bath.

AN INVITING semi spacious dining room and kitchen is achieved with ingenious proportions.

THE INTRICATE details and earth tones used in the master's bedroom creates a luxurious reprieve.

• Umbrella. At Divine's uphill counterpart, the Umbrella also features a cathedral ceiling and open below design. It has a minimum lot of 206 sq m lot area.

• Europa. Large families will find Europa a luxurious option with its bigger living areas and has details with its minimum lot area of 141 sq m. The master's bedroom of the Europa has its own toilet and bath and a balcony wrapped around the exterior. It also features two bedrooms, two toilets and baths, roomy living and dining areas, kitchen, family room with a lovely window seat, lanai, porch, carport and maid's room.

Mille Luce also offers four well-defined clusters with different living configurations to address the varying budgets, needs and tastes of its residents.

• Home Parkway. Named after a famous commercial area in Rome, Mille Luce's commercial area brings practical conveniences within the reach of its homeowners. The surrounding old mango trees provide cool shades ideal for shopping around the vicinity and leisure walks.

• Promenade. Allocated for single-detached homes, the Promenade is adjacent to the roadside and situated amid the orchard's most abundant growth. Price starts at P3.5-P4 million.

• Villa. Another cluster found at the highest peak of Mille Luce, the Villa serves the terraced, single-detached homes. Each unit in Villa features an inner courtyard perfect for experiencing the cool outdoors within the privacy of your own home. Price starts at P3.5-P4 million.

• La Scala. A cul de sac cluster of multiple family dwellings, the La Scala evokes the feeling of belonging to a close-knit community while maintaining each family's privacy. The area is gated for exclusivity and added security.

Though tucked away from the hustles of the metropolis, Mille Luce is conveniently located on Hi-L Quezon Avenue and is a quick 30-minute drive from the business and commercial district of Ortigas. Discover the height of sensible living where you visit Mille Luce. Property purchase may be arranged by calling 638-9000 and 638-8000 and 634-9992. You may also visit its website at www.crownasia.com.ph for more details.

DIEDERICHS at night

PANORAMIC view of the San Lorenzo Tower

A view worth waking up to

PEOPLE OFTEN GO ON ON DETOURS without regard to cost in order to enjoy breathtaking views of nature in the highlands. At least for a few hours, they are relieved of their cares and feel like they're on top of the world.

Just imagine what it would be like to wake up in that feeling very night morning, right inside your own bedroom.

Panoramic view

The Residences at Greenhill is the country's premier and only residential address to be part of the 5-star Shangri-la resort by three successive Laguna, San Lorenzo and Shangri-la...all await the lives of city dwellers by bringing greenery and sky gardens right into their own home.

Infuse your senses with a panoramic view of the mountains and bay beyond, as well as the lush green park landscapes of Greenhill. Below, low buildings in Makati can claim a view worth waking up to.

In addition, right below your prestigious address is everything you can possibly need—food, entertainment, shopping and even work. Engage in an energetic workout, while watching the dance of a new day by eightfold, delight in the lights and sounds of Makati's pulsating city life, or retreat to sweet slumber on a blanket of stars woven as your backdrop.

Extension to the outdoors

Many of the units at The Residences at Greenhill will have balconies and bay windows, your ticket to an extension of the open interior environment to the outdoors. The units of the San Lorenzo Tower in particular afford an easy, unobstructed glance of either the breathtaking Makati cityline or the lush greenery of the San Lorenzo Village, all the way to Manila bay and the south.

What awaits you in your own backyard is an impressive array of full-scale, luxurious condominium amenities exclusive for your own use.

Your new home will be a new haven where you can enjoy your life's greatest pleasures, with the most significant people around you.

To know more about The Residences at Greenhill, please call 728-7600, e-mail ayala-sales@ayala-land.com.ph or visit www.ayala-land.com.ph. Model units available for viewing at the third level, Greenhill 3.

Knockout empanaditas served at Palace . . .

From page A1

boxing champion Manny Pacquiao and was presented to him yesterday during his courtesy call to Malacañang.

According to tavern, it was President Macapagal-Arroyo who asked her to come up with a special treat for Pacquiao, who came home a people's hero after his big win against Mexican Erik Morales over the weekend.

After two days of contemplating, nodding and baking, Aurelia said she and her 15-member team came up with a glutted treat for Pacquiao, which she aptly named "Pacquiao Empanaditas."

Indeed, both the Presidents and Pacquiao gushed when it was served for merienda.

Elegantly presented on crisp round platters, two empanaditas, baked in the shape of boxing gloves, held up the words "Manny 122" which were made of pâte brisée, pâte doughé and spelled with poppy seeds. Around 10 was

PASTRY CON TKO Palace chef Edna Aurelia (behind Ms Arroyo) concocted with "love and passion" empanaditas shaped like boxing gloves with No. 10 on it.

when Pacquiao brought down Morales.

Cooked with love

Aurelia said the empanaditas had a delicious filling of chicken, cuisine and wild mushrooms cooked in white wine.

"They were made with love, passion and pagmamahal sa bansa (love for Pacquiao)," she said.

Aurelia and her team baked enough empanaditas to feed 150 hungry people. Pacquiao's relatives, who came with him to his Palace visit, were brought home some of the pastries, she said.

The pastries were also served in corners of the Cabinet and of the national security team who had a meeting at the Palace yesterday.

Asked how much the concoction cost, then to add the plated treat was only P28, noting how Ms Arroyo had always expressed the Palace to have a prudent kitchen.

She added that if the treat were served in bowls, it would cost a hefty P600 a plate—surely an amount no many people would want to champion.

Politicians ride on Pacquiao . . .

From page A1

famous mask as the people's idol like a famous hero.

"Friday should have belonged to Manny Pacquiao, and no one else. But Malacañang turned his homecoming into anything but a photo op for President Macapagal-Arroyo," Binay said.

Politicians stormed almost everywhere, as though willing to be Pacquiao's shadow. Even Sen Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan came on the plane with him.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, who searched after flight in Las Vegas, had been noncily if disguised for his presence on the ring as though looking to Pacquiao's victory.

In a victory memorable later, Pacquiao was sandwiched by Arroyo [in his trademark floral shirt] and Manila Rep. Mitos Bosco. Behind them were a bevy of executives and other officials.

Public figures, including Agriculture and Vice President Noli de Castro, were also amazed at the Palace when Pacquiao called on the session.

As finds leaflet popped, Ms Arroyo joined Pacquiao in raising a clenched fist, looking like she was ready for a fight.

Earlier, Ms Arroyo greeted Pacquiao dressed before national television at the Palace's main room.

"Manny, congratulations! Today's Pacquiao Day!" she said, welcoming the boxer and his family to what looked like only Judy and his parents.

Ms Arroyo also gave Pacquiao a special treat, pure bakasi, aptly called "Pacquiao empanaditas," made especially for him by Palace executive chef Edna Aurelia and her 15-member team.

Both Ms Arroyo and Pacquiao mingled the most, after which the boxer had endless photo sessions and autograph-signing sprees with Palace employees.

At the Rizal Hall, Pacquiao profusely thanked the Arroyos and the crowd for supporting him in his fight with Morales.

While the city of Manila gave Pacquiao a red carpet welcome, the country's financial center could only grips at not being able to see two a glimpse of Pacquiao's lethal fists.

Manila's appointment Mahal Mayor Jaime Binay's Makati Business Club has yet to announce how Pacquiao's victory memorable which took the country's most famous and beloved fighter around the known administration-friendly cities of Manila and Quezon City.

'Hijacked by Malacañang'

"Manny Pacquiao deserves a welcome fit for a world-class and honorable Filipino, and it could not be complete without a parade along Ayala Avenue. He was, however, hijacked by Malacañang," said Binay, who has been at the forefront of the campaign for the return of Ms Arroyo on allegations that she cheated in the 2004 election—all in order that everyone can see her in the day.

"Makati's private sector, the biggest earner in Philippine business, was ready at a moment's notice to participate in this momentous event," Binay said in a statement.

Expectant Makati

The Makati City Hall had expected organizers of Pacquiao's parade to include in its route even just the stretch of Ayala Avenue in the Makati Central Business District, where many other Filipinos who had brought home glory from abroad had been honored with a victory parade.

"We had even requested the 'do not' be logging for him to be brought here. We all know that it has been customary for all Filipinos who have brought honor to the country to be brought to Makati," said Makati Information and Community Relations Department chief Joey Salgado.

Ayala's buildings showered confetti on Filipinos in the streets in November 2003, when he came home victorious after defeating Mexico's Marco Antonio Barrera.

One big photo-op

Last October, Makati's workers, consumers and [ostensibly loyal] subscribers of mass services to catch a glimpse of Filipino Beauty Princess Lara Quigaman after she was crowned Miss International in Japan.

In December, traffic once again stopped around the busy business district when the city hosted a parade for Filipino athletes who emerged as overall champions in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

In defense of GMA

"What we see was another example of shameless trash-grabbing Pacquiao scene bravely and unwittingly. And the irony is that he met the Arroyos' appetites in spread of objecting to the last presidential election," the mayor said.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita defended Ms Arroyo's welcome for Pacquiao.

"I think as the leader of this country she should be at the forefront of welcoming our champions," Ermita said.

"Ms Arroyo was there from an hour with Pacquiao throughout the day in town, she looked subdued during Pacquiao's call on her at Malacañang.

The two met up again during an evening reliance for the honor and tribute who had brought the country honor—and this time the President was subdued during the the last time, singing not once but twice.

The first was a duet rendition with Pacquiao of the boxer's debut song, "Ibra Sa Iyo Ang Laban Na Ito." Then Ms Arroyo joined other athletes and singer Sarah Geronimo in their up-tiff song "Pinoy Ako."

The others honored in the ceremony dubbed "A Tribute to Filipino Champions," were four-time boxer Jeorce Java and athletes who were in the recent Southeast Asian Games and in the Paralympics.

Miss International Precious Lara Quigaman, Miss Universe Margarita Moran, Olympian Arnel and Trade 4 pugil Cristina "Tina" Rupprecht, who both returned cash and checks they had received from, were also given recognition.

Traffic was a standstill at both lanes of Roxas Boulevard were closed to give way to the motorcade.

Like a Siamese twin

Asimova also received lockdown for seemingly hogging the spotlight during the Pacquiao homecoming.

Asimova hung on to the house from the time he set foot in the Philippines at dawn, to his visit at Malacañang, to the motorcade around the city and all the way to the stage in the evening tribute to Filipino heroes in Manila.

Garbed in a loud, red Hawaiian shirt, Asimova appeared to be always beside the priest/figure to the point of, according to netizens, practically rummaging the President.

An election gimmick?

Asimova didn't even give way to Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte when the motorcade reached Quezon City.

It became a family affair when Asimova's son, Richard Asimova, a 4th-year BSN student, was granted a rare interview by Pacquiao shortly after his arrival.

Former Manila Rep. Harry Angping seemed appalled.

"Pacquiao is not even from Manila. Why is Asimova claiming Pacquiao as if he was his own man? I doubt if he did anything to help Pacquiao train for the fight with him," said Angping. "He and his family clearly want to boost their stock for next year's elections."

Multitudes cheer RP idol

From page A1

throughout a route of 34 streets starting from City Hall, to the Blumentritt Chinatown, to the drama of Tondo, to the stretches of Espeña and Quezon Avenue, and other parts of Quezon City, including the ABS-CBN and GMA broadcast compounds.

For Mr Rose—a vast improvement from his past motorcades which mostly used an unadorned mini-truck or SUV—was a hero's shrine on wheels, with Philippine flags and banners forming the backdrop, above which hovered a symbolic dove of peace.

The exhibit's front featured giant boxing gloves made of papier mache.

The champ shared the float with another winning Filipino boxer from the Jan. 22 fight night in Las Vegas—Jeorce Java.

Hitching a ride

But both day matters were nearly outmaneuvered for exposure by a group of local politicians who literally latched on their triumphant ride.

The motorcade, which started at around 10:30 a.m., fittingly started near the monument of plebeian revolutionary leader Andres Bonifacio, as though signaling that the whole affair would be a treat for the Pinoy masses who have embraced Pacquiao as their modern-day hero.

Not since FPJ

And the mass did pour out to full force for the Tondo bakery helper from General Santos City who went on to become one of the most colorful stage-to-stolen names in Philippine lore.

The parade, which went on without pause despite brief rainshowers, inducted the most creative expressions of idol-worship not seen since the 2004 presidential campaign of the late movie icon Fernando Poe Jr.

Teenage boys released pet pigeons on cue. A dragon dance and lion act—an all-Chinese image greeted Pacquiao's nonexistent though Chinoiserie.

Fireworks erupted, and confetti rained down every few blocks.

A deranged

Everyone with a cell phone camera simply had to take snapshots of the passing sports celebrity, from along the streets of Manila Harbor Avenue restaurant had a good view from their rooftops, not-jokingly setting expensive digital cameras and handycams.

The legions had found a demigod.

And they both praised and teased him, as shown by some of their placards.

Some caressed pure admiration by calling Manny "The National Pin [Pambansang Kamao]" and "The Theory of Mexico."

The locators saw at least two placards that screamed: "Pacquiao for President."

'Bear me a child'

But then Peter humor especially went to work. A man bore a cardboard sign saying "Manny Pa'Ore [Come Home]." Others pleaded: "Manny bang nanok naman (Pun Ribes about a punch!)" and "Manny, anakan mo ako (Let me bear your child)."

Street peddlers tried to cash in and offered Pacquiao pins and shirts.

But perhaps the most telling sign of Pacquiao's stardom was the emergence of his easy-over, Impersonator, who lingered at the Manila City Hall grounds at the start of the parade, hoping for the presence-take notice.

His stage name: "Manny Pakito (after the name of vinegar-based dish)."

Uniting a nation

Chorus of "Manny! Manny!" broke the early morning stillness as soon as fans saw him emerge from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Customs and Terminal 2.

The shows sounded like the voice of a proud nation welcoming home a son who had single-handedly brought together a people deeply divided over politics.

More than a hundred fans waited patiently outside the airport.

Pacquiao's gym

"I'm not dumpy," 5-year-old Jonna Ann Ibanez-Fernando said in Filipino. "I want to see my idol."

Fernando's father, Rinaldo, and Jonalyn told him he wanted to see Pacquiao in person.

Then, father and son joined their neighbors in the longest MLO in metropolitan Manila, which formed a delegation to meet Pacquiao.

The gym where Pacquiao had trained for more than 10 years is located on Pioneer Street in Barangay 683, according to its chair, Bonifacio Bautista.

Which explains the barangay's deep affinity for the man who knocked out Mexican boxing hero Erik Morales.

Pacquiao's friends from the Gumtilan "Gym" Contingent Inc. also came.

"We love him. He's a true Filipino. His priorities are for the masses" Ernie Evangelio, 28, said.

Family reunion

Pacquiao was eager to see his two sons, craning his neck to look for them in the sea of welcomers.

As he made his way down the stairs, he finally saw 3-year-old Emmanuel Jr. and 4-year-old Michael Stephen.

Pacquiao's mother, Dionisia, also came.

Passengers waiting for their luggage, customs and immigration officers, and practically the entire Terminal 2 stopped to welcome Pacquiao with cheers.

Uproar over Aldrea

The Manila mayor's son, former Lieutenant Kim Atienza, created an uproar among media people who had followed the mass on by the airport authority for the night.

The media had been told to stay behind the railings and advised that Pacquiao would not make any several statements.

However, the younger Atienza, who hosts a morning show on ABS-CBN, pushed right through despite chasing the private cop at the gate to get an exclusive interview.

He snapped the interview after an airport official told him about the breaks being committing media people.

Presidential son Jiuseppe Arroyo, Jiuseppe Arroyo also accompanied with his family on a different flight. Right about an hour before Pacquiao faced the media but was largely ignored by journalists.

Surround Capitol Region Police Office Director Napoleon Calcheta collapsed at the airport due to fatigue shortly after Pacquiao's plane touched down.

At the Manila City Hall, red, white and blue confetti rained down as Pacquiao and his entourage arrived to the cheers of hundreds of people, who later turned into a mob.

"I hope Filipinos can unite," Pacquiao told reporters. "Let's try victory on the people."

Asked if he was willing to help unite Filipinos, particularly military in the face of talk of unrest in the ranks, Pacquiao said he would help to the best of his ability.

Pacquiao refused to comment when asked if he was willing to help the government in its drive for constitutional reform.

"I don't know anything about that. My politics for now, he's focus on sports for now," he told reporters.

With reports from Nikko Dizon and Tina Santos

The other champ: Outside, looking in

By Tina G. Santos

HE WAS ROBBED! A CHAMPION HIT: they wouldn't let him into the room where Manny Pacquiao was.

Invited by some officials to join yesterday's press conference for Pacquiao at the Manila City Hall, Jimrex Java repeatedly received shabby treatment from people in charge of security—or so said several witnesses, including employees.

They told this because that Java was denied entry into Bulwagan Hilagan, where Pacquiao was meeting reporters.

Java is the Philippine lightweight champion. He also did the steamy ground when he knocked out Mexican Geronimo Hernandez in the undercard of the Pacquiao-Erik Morales rematch.

Pacquiao holds no crown, except the World Boxing Council interim belt in the junior featherweight title—the title given to the best outside of the top 10 contenders circle.

'They ignored him'

"The security officers apparently did not recognize him. But they still ignored him even as we were shouting to them who he was," said one witness.

But the 22-year-old southpaw did not want to make a big deal of the incident, saying he chose to treat outside the hall because it was so crowded.

"Gumaban lang talaga ako kasi madami nagsisiksikan (so I really stepped out because there were too many people)," he said, trying to downplay the incident.

"This is really for him, he is his name ... It is enough that I am part of this (welcome)," said Java, seated in one of the welcome floats for Pacquiao.

From page A1

Bishops get hate mail, too

A two-page letter titled "Take Your Guilt—Not Ours, the People, Not the Other Way Around" was sent to the CBCP Secretariat by the so-called "Manabilayang Group."

The letter, dated Jan. 25, was sarcastic, making it clear that it wasn't expecting anything of value to come out of the CBCP's pastoral statement.

"We hope, and the any other letter that you may have received, this one is not a joke," it began. "We shall not beseech you to issue a statement affirming the clean conviction of majority of the Filipino people that the fake President Macapagal-Arroyo should step the diamonds and give up power that is not hers."

The group, which said it was formed and released a semi-secret statement in July 2005, which called on the President to examine her conscience, but refused to demand her resignation.

Critics said this statement actually helped Ms Arroyo keep her post.

"It is not even enough so to read the signs of the times," the letter said. "We have done so and concluded that this is not a time to overlook Ms Arroyo's crimes and simply 'move on'—an opportunistic piece of advice from you that WE REJECT."

Poverty, not politics

The letter also had a problem with the CBCP's advice that the country should focus on the problem of worsening poverty—not politics.

"It is as if not to submit, in silent acquiescence, to the exploitation and abuses of the powerful administration under the prevailing socio-political and economic system—does not ultimately address poverty," the letter said.

Quite a number of similarly angry letters had reached the CBCP office, according to two Church officials who spoke on condition of anonymity, for fear of being castigated by the hierarchy.

'Pagcor descended on bishops'

"They usually land in the trash bin. They don't reach the bishops anymore," one of them told the Inquirer.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday admitted that the CBCP had been getting its share of mail, there is the form of hate mail, especially after the July pastoral statement was made public.

"It appears that the people were disappointed with the July statement," he said. "They were expecting more and the CBCP apparently didn't come up to their expectations."

A common text message attacking the bishops last year was the one that "God descended on the apostles, Pagcor descended on the bishops."

The message was apparently referring to the income reports that a number of bishops had been receiving lucky (sub-)donations from the then-state gambling monopoly Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

The story came out shortly after former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman revealed that Ms Arroyo could not kick out Pagcor chair Efraim Genuino because he "takes care of the bishops."

Blog back

CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo also received spicy comments from readers in his Internet blog called "Reflections" (accessed at www.abplag.dotnetsiteground.com or at the official CBCP website for the past few days).

"Until the truth about the alleged cheating in the last elections comes out, the country will never be in peace," one reader blogged back. "I just hope our leaders are that light and begin to act on it."

Another wrote: "Everything about the Philippines—the instability, peace, etc., has been said ... The challenge is for us to get our acts together and pursue the struggle."

Still another reader reminded the bishops that "even the most powerful man is not exempt from the law ... Truth and conviction [are] the enemy of dishonest people. Only truth can set us free. Let's continue to trust the people and not trust her supporters who can be bought by people's money."

The WORLD

Ellyn Lorraine B. Gonzales

World urges Hamas to renounce violence

PARIS—WESTERN POWERS warned on Thursday that they would not deal with a Palestinian government led by Hamas—regarded as terrorists by the EU and the United States—unless it renounces violence and recognizes Israel's right to exist.

"The United States does not support political parties that want to destroy our ally Israel," US Treasury Secretary John Snow said after President George W. Bush said after Hamas won a landslide election victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections, "People must renounce that part of their platform."

But Hamas had seen its overwhelmingly anti-Israel victory in Wednesday's parliamentary elections as a mandate to end years of corruption in the Palestinian Authority and to push for the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip soon "completely free of"—and unimpeded by—the Israeli military presence.

They both hailed the smooth vote, and expressed dismay at Hamas' ruling nearly two-thirds of the 132 parliament seats.

The militant group has carried out dozens of suicide bombings, some in Israel's destruction and has said that it opposes peace talks and will not disarm.

"We must respect the election result, although it was not the outcome we had wished," Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen said.

In France, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin said in renouncing violence, accepting progress toward peace, and recognizing Israel and existing peace accords were "indispensable" conditions for working with "a Palestinian government of national unity."

Hamas' unexpected victory threw the future of the peace process between Palestinians and Israel into turmoil, and raised immediate questions about how the United States and other countries might still be able to influence the process—especially if they refused to deal with the militants.

"Hamas won," said Mahdi Perez Pena, senior The Word "Hamas is clearly not a democratic movement. Its ideas are newly and humanistic ideas.

"What do we do now?"

There were calls from the Arab and Islamic worlds for Western governments to accept the result.

"The best to adhere to ground realities," said Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Top officials from the so-called Quartet of Mideast peace negotiators—the US, the EU, the United Nations and Russia—spoke Thursday evening by telephone and planned to meet Monday in London. UN secretary spokesperson Mark Okabe said at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who took part in Thursday's phone conversation, was to be at the meeting Monday along with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and EU Foreign Policy chief Javier Solana, Okabe said.

"You cannot have one foot in politics and another in terror," Rice said, adding that for the United States, Hamas was still a terrorist organization.

Concern crossed political divides, with traditional supporters of the Palestinian cause—such as Italy's center-left opposition—sensing those opposing victory. The Italian government sent Hamas' victory could indefinitely postpone any chance of fresh Palestinian peace and make the creation of a Palestinian state more difficult.

"It is a very, very, very bad result," Premier Silvio Berlusconi said. AP

A HAMAS supporter climbs the front entrance of the Palestinian Legislative Council building in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Jan. 26, to hang the movement's flag. AFP

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Hamas has clear domestic agenda, murky on Israel

By Amy Teibel

JERUSALEM—ISLAMIC MILITANT group Hamas has swept the Palestinian parliament in a stunning first run from a virtual democratic upstart, pledging government corruption and restoring order to lawless streets.

But when are much murkier when it comes to explaining how they'll deal with a Jewish state whose existence they reject—but cannot ignore.

Hamas' domestic agenda was as much a message of two decades of dogged grass-roots work as it was a vote of no-confidence in the corrupt-ridden, mismanaged Fatah Party, which had dominated Palestinian politics for 40 years.

An outgrowth of the militant Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the highly disciplined Hamas scored points with the largely unemployed, cash-strapped public by offering a wide-ranging network of health, education and welfare services.

Many support Hamas' political and charity wings, have been always unconcerned with its military wing.

But the group's alternative to the Fatah government's roadblocks would subtly put its hatred to its make friends even among Palestinians tired of the cycle of violence to which Hamas, with its suicide bombings and rocket attacks, played such a major role.

Now, having captured 76 of parliament's 132 seats in Wednesday's election, the politically inexperienced Hamas finds itself catapulted into steering the Palestinians through one of the world's most intractable conflicts.

"What their real agenda is I can't say," said Palestinian lawmaker Hanan Ashrawi, a former Fatah legislator reelected to parliament on a third party list. "I don't think they have it fully formulated."

"We know what they say they want all of Palestine and say that negotiations did not work," Ashrawi said. "They talk about ensuring reform. This doesn't mean they will do it."

Talal Skaf, a commentator for the Palestine-al-Ayyam newspaper, said Hamas hadn't wanted to take control of the government, preferring to let Fatah take charge.

Now that it has been forced to take the reins, Skaf thinks Hamas will find itself forced to deal with Israel, if only on day-to-day issues in which Israel is involved, such as electricity, water, imports and exports.

"Hamas and Israel people's daily life without coordinating and dealing with Israel," Skaf said.

One way to do that would be by inviting Fatah to join its government and let Fatah deal with Israel—an idea Fatah rejected on Thursday, fearful it would be to abandon its violent ideology.

Since the election, Hamas leaders have signaled things would go either way.

One leader, Khaled al-Meshaal, called on regaining Israel and negotiating with it not "war on our agenda." But Mahmoud Zahar, the group's top leader in Gaza, said he was ready to maintain the conflict if Israel does likewise. AP

Massive tunnel dug by drug traffickers discovered beneath Mexico-US border

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA – US and Mexican officials have discovered a massive, one-kilometre-long tunnel dug under their border by drug traffickers, one of the largest ever found, they said Thursday.

The sophisticated tunnel, lined with concrete and equipped with ventilation and lights, is believed to run from a warehouse in the north's capital, according to the Mexican prosecutor general's office.

US authorities did not immediately provide the dimensions of the tunnel discovered Wednesday, but confirmed it was "massive," much larger than the more than 15 others discovered in the region since the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks on US soil.

"The investigation continues into what is believed to be one of the largest and most sophisticated cross-border smuggling tunnels discovered along the California-Mexico border," the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said in a statement.

The tunnel, discovered by US Border Patrol agents who tipped off Mexican authorities, begins beneath a warehouse in the Mexican border town of Tijuana and stretches to Otay, near the US border hub of San Diego.

"Mexican law enforcement officers ran through the tunnel into the United States and collectively popped up into a warehouse in the United States," said Michael Unzueta, special agent in charge for ICE investigations in San Diego.

Beneath the warehouse, the police discovered a 1.83 by 2.6 metre shaft equipped with electricity and a ventilation system.

They also seized more than two tons of marijuana, stashed in about 60 bales, in the tunnel, officials said.

The length and well-constructed structure of the tunnel, which was 1.5 metres wide, make it unusual.

Officials stressed that the tunnel could also have been used by people smugglers bringing illegal immigrants into the United States and even by weapons traffickers.

"Whether they are designed to smuggle drugs, people, weapons or other contraband, these tunnels pose a threat to our nation's security," said Unzueta.

"ICE is committed to working with our law enforcement partners to dismantle the tunnels and the criminal organizations behind them," he said.

The 3,141-kilometre border – that stretches from San Diego on the West coast to the Gulf of Mexico, across California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas – is notoriously porous and the focus of US security concerns since a backlash by US conservatives who say the US government is not doing enough to bar illegals. AFP

Israel tried to kill Bin Laden in '96, says newspaper

JERUSALEM – Israel's Mossad spy service and a foreign counterpart enlisted a confidante of Osama bin Laden to kill the al-Qaida leader in 1996 but the plan fell apart over a poisoned dagger, a newspaper said on Thursday.

Mossad picked up Bin Laden's trail while helping US and Egyptian agents probe an attempt by Islamist militants on the life of Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak as he visited Ethiopia, Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth said, citing unnamed sources.

According to the report, Mossad recruited a woman close to Bin Laden well in the help of the intelligence service in her country. Neither the woman's name nor nationality were given.

Reports said the woman was meant to kill Bin Ladin, but the mission was aborted as a result of a breakdown of ties between Israel and her country linked to Israeli-Palestinian tensions.

Contacted by Reuters, Danny Yatom, who was head of Mossad at the time, declined comment on the report.

US officials believe Bin Laden is now hiding in the region of the rugged border dividing Afghanistan and Pakistan. Reuters

Pollution cutting China's sunny days, researcher finds

By Michael Casey

BANGKOK, THAILAND – CHINA SEES have darkened over the past 50 years, possibly due to haze resulting from a nine-fold increase in fossil fuel emissions, according to researchers from the US Department of Energy.

The researchers, writing in this month's edition of Geophysical Research Letters, found that the amount of solar radiation measured at more than 500 stations nationwide fell from 1954 to 2001 despite a decrease in cloudcover.

"Normally, more frequent cloud-free days should be sunnier and brighter but this doesn't happen in our study," said Yun Qian of the energy department's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Washington state.

"The pollution (that) resulted from human activity may have created a haze which absorbs and deflects the sun's rays," Qian, the study's lead author, said in an e-mail interview Friday.

Air pollution is widespread in China. As-fuelled factories billow smoke, many residents still use coal to heat their rudimentary old houses, and a rapid increase in car ownership has fuelled the motorways in exhaust fumes.

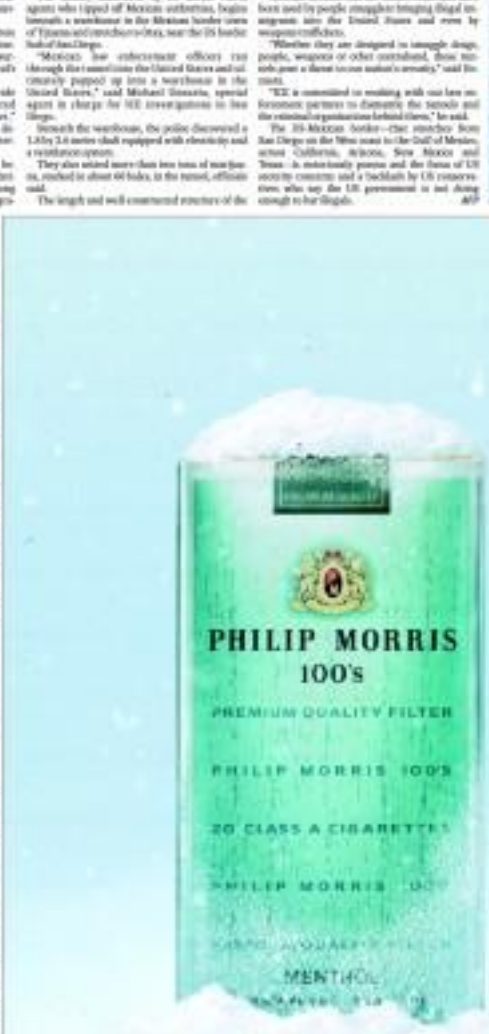
The amount of sunlight hitting the ground has fallen by 3.2 watts per square meter in each of the last five decades amid a nine-fold increase in fossil fuel emissions, the study said.

Herbert G. Fabian, who studies urban pollution and transportation issues for the Asian Development Bank, said the study's conclusion "makes sense" but that more information is needed.

"There really is (an) air pollution problem and a haze problem in China because (of) clear economic and pollution," he said. "But we can't say conclusively that the reduction in sunlight is due to haze."

The study also said that haze appears to have masked the impact of global warming by reflecting sunlight back into space and cooling the Earth's surface.

"The haze may have masked the effects of global warming across large parts of China, particularly in the central and eastern regions, where daily high temperatures have actually been decreasing," Qian said. "This may seem like good news, but any success China has in curbing emissions will accelerate the effects of global warming in those areas when the clothing mask is lifted." AP



Government Warning
is dangerous

STILL SEEKING ANSWERS
Members of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo terrorism listen to a speech during the 26th Marcha de la Resistencia, a 24-hour march marking the organization's fail of such demonstrations. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo has held 24-hour protests each year since 1981 in front of the presidential Pink House, to demand answers on the fate of the 30,000 people who disappeared during Argentina's 1976-1983 dictatorship. AFP

Agent Orange makers ordered to pay veterans

SEOUL—A SOUTH KOREAN COURT ON THURSDAY ordered two US manufacturers of Agent Orange to pay $65 million in compensation in a landmark victory for Vietnam War veterans exposed to the toxic defoliant.

Dow Chemical and Monsanto were ordered to compensate around 6,800 South Korean veterans in what officials said was the first victory for veterans taking on US chemical companies in the courts.

"The plaintiffs will get compensation varying from 62 million won ($6,200) to 46 million won each," Seoul High Court senior Judge Choi Hyung-deok told AFP. Total compensation would reach 62 billion won ($65 million), the judge added.

There separate damage suits were filed against the two US firms on behalf of some 20,000 South Korean war veterans and their families. Two were upheld while one case was dismissed.

South Korea sent some 300,000 troops to fight alongside the United States and millions of Vietnamese locals during the 1960-1973 war.

The court ruled that the firms produced stronger dioxins than necessary due to design flaws.

"The defendants manufactured by the second contested dioxins in excess of the generated standard due to product design flaws," the ruling said.

It said the dioxins triggered 11 medical conditions, including lymphomas, lung cancer, diarrhea, persistent cancer and various skin illnesses.

The court said there "is an epidemiological correlation between the defoliant and the illnesses" that the war veterans were suffering.

In the case thrown out by the court, plaintiffs failed to establish a link between medical problems and the victims, the ruling said.

Last year, a US court dismissed a lawsuit filed on behalf of millions of Vietnamese which accused US chemical firms including Monsanto and Dow of crimes against humanity.

An appeal has been lodged against the dismissal.

Vietnam War veterans from Australia and New Zealand have also campaigned for compensation for illnesses related to exposure to Agent Orange. The Canberra government has recognized the Australian claims while New Zealand veterans filed a lawsuit for compensation last year.

The South Korean veterans filed their case with a lower court in 1999. The case was thrown out in 2000, and the plaintiffs appealed to the High Court the same year.

The chemical companies, represented by a local law firm, offered to settle out of court two years ago but negotiations broke down.

In the United States, chemical companies paid $180 million into a fund for US veterans in 1984. In an out of court settlement with no admission of liability.

Since then US veterans have been seeking additional compensation to that settlement, and in June 2003 the Supreme Court ruled they could continue to pursue claims against the manufacturers despite the earlier settlement.

Between 1961 and 1971, the US Army dropped more than 100,000 tons of toxic chemicals on Vietnam, according to the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange. The group says between 2.1 and 4.4 million Vietnamese were exposed.

Named after the colored stripes on its containers, Agent Orange was used to destroy the vegetation used offensively by Vietnamese communist forces for cover and food. AFP

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DONATELLO PIECE
A rare bronze relief of the Madonna and Child by Italian Renaissance master Donatello, seen in this undated photograph, was sold for $4,488,000 by Sotheby's auction house in New York Jan. 26. REUTERS

WORLDBRIEFS

New bird flu vaccine

HONG KONG—A new bird flu vaccine could stop disease-ravaging bird pest a month to make and completely protected chickens from this deadly (H5N1) virus, US researchers reported on Thursday. The genetically engineered vaccine answers to fulfill three scores of months-old vaccine technology being pushed by public health experts who want to improve the poor, old-fashioned methods now used to fight the flu. Current influenza vaccines for both chickens and humans take months to make and are grown in chicken eggs. Production to assemble mobile vaccines do not provide perfect protection. AFP/REUTERS

WMD task force

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon's latest strategy review proposes a new military unit that would unleash thousands of weapons of mass destruction on countries such as North Korea, such as al-Qaeda groups. The Washington Times reported on Friday. The WMD task force would be comprised of several hundred troops, including special operations forces and intelligence personnel, the Times said. AFP/REUTERS

Enron's chiefs to face jury

HOUSTON—Four years after the dramatic demise of Enron Corp., former chairman Lay and Jeffrey Skilling will enter a trial in courtroom in Houston on Monday in four charges linking them to one of the biggest business disasters in US history. The case against Lay, 64, and Skilling, 52, hinges on whether the two executives, who once enthralled Wall Street by creating a company that became the nation's seventh-largest, overstated of Enron's financial gains that prospered on energy while hiding billions of dollars in debt. The Enron Task Force, a special unit created by the US Department of Justice to investigate wrongdoing at the Houston-based company, indicted several former Enron executives. Skilling, who has also been charged with insider trading for selling millions of dollars worth of Enron stock before the company's collapse, is also one of eight defendants charged in connection with the failure of Enron's broadband unit. AFP/REUTERS

Mexico serial killers

MEXICO CITY—Twenty university women who allegedly committed a string of elderly women, then strangled them. The other is 20-year soldier accused of hunting gay men from bars and killing them. Mexico City police had two suspected serial killers in custody. Now they are saying they have caught the capital's infamous "Little Old Lady Killer" and not been fooled another strangler of women. Authorities said Juana Barraza, 40, was caught fleeing a house Wednesday where an 82-year-old woman had been strangled with a stethoscope. Prosecutors said they have no doubt she is responsible for the murders of 16 women. Barraza, who confessed to the killings of four homosexuals and 16 elderly women in the previous years. Authorities suspect. Juan Oscar Morales, 20, was arrested Saturday in the killings of four homosexuals and 16 elderly women in the previous years. Authorities suspect. Juan Oscar Morales, 20, was arrested Saturday in the killings of four homosexuals and 16 elderly women in the previous years. Authorities suspect. AP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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OPINION

'No-El' again

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CLEARER US? PRESS Secretary Ignacio Bunye told reporters, after the Council of State meeting last Tuesday, that "the ratio of those who refused was 4:1" in favor of going ahead with the elections scheduled in May 2007. Former President Fidel Ramos put the ratio in a much higher 9:1, saying, "I think all of us, say, 99 percent, agreed to push ahead with the 2007 elections." And the general public thought that this meant that to the disabused proposal to cancel the elections put forward by the Arroyo-appointed Consultative Commission on Charter Change.

EDITORIAL

But Bunye, Ramos and almost everybody else thought wrong. On Wednesday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the President's spokesman and the former president were just voicing their thoughts on the matter. "There was no consensus, because [the issue] was not thrown to the floor," Ermita said. To prove the point, Malacañang released the communiqué issued after the meeting, which didn't mention the holding of elections or anything else points that were agreed upon.

So now the prospect of holding office for three more years without going through the rigors, expense and suspense of an election is there for local officials and our government to dream about and drive them to work for Charter change.

While Malacañang has consistently refused to state clearly its position on the issue, despite the demands, deadlines and threats of Reason, Ermita's clarification has let the cat out of the bag. But was there ever any doubt what was most interested in selling the idea?

President Macapagal-Arroyo is obviously banking on the cancellation of the elections as one way of stopping calls for her to cut her term so that the nation can put the question of the legitimacy of her presidency behind. It will also consolidate political support for her administration, as grassroots level officials and lawmakers, her political base, will be its immediate beneficiaries.

But it is not the prerogative of the President, much less of the Consolidative Commission, to amend the terms of public officials to buy their support for constitutional change. Here as it is not for the commission also to tell Vice President Noli de Castro the vice presidency in the context of a parliamentary system so that he will not complain that his term is being cut. Offering carrots to politicians to change the Constitution is about as low as one can go. Elective offices are not for the politicians to give, and especially not to themselves, in the case of lawmakers. That power resides in the electorate.

And now that the administration seems to keep holding out the hope of no elections to its supporters, it will be there to spoil every attempt to seriously examine and debate the provisions of the Constitution that really need to be changed. Until now, the debates on the ConCom's recommendations have focused on "No-El." With the administration opting to keep the controversial issue alive, it is doubtful if the discussions will move on to more substantial issues, like the shift to a parliamentary and federal system of government.

Much remains to be done before Charter change can become a reality, even without the distraction of the No-El debate. If those pushing for Charter change are truly convinced that a change in the form of government is absolutely necessary to reform society and lick poverty, they will have to rise above their own selfish interests to see the process of change in motion. For the congressmen, that means resisting the temptation of prolonging their stay in office for free. For the senators, it means looking beyond their presidential ambitions as well as rising above their pique. For Malacañang, it means going beyond the President's current troubles and serving as a lightning rod for real constitutional change.

Above all, perhaps, the two branches of the government need to impress upon the people that the imperative not the urgency of constitutional change. To do that, they must earn the trust of the people. Clamoring like No-El remains curiously does not achieve that.

Criticizing the critic

SEPARATE OPINION

Joaquin A. Cruz

THIS IS MY ANSWER TO THE ARTICLE written by Ismael G. Khan Jr., submitted on 08 Jan of the Supreme Court, and published in the paper last Wednesday. I compliment him for his loyalty to the institution but, regrettably, not to equal-mindedness and accuracy.

Mr. Khan's not for lowering the bar to assist contemplated, for he knows it's likely to suggest President Macapagal-Arroyo who has appointed as many as 10 of its present members. He cites the cases questioning Executive Free As's natural born citizenship, the EDSA and Mining Laws, and the Flatoc, where many of the justices voted against their beneficiaries. These cases, however, did not favor the President. Many of the parties favored by justices being Poe and Congress that enacted the said laws while Pimentel (which she was personally interested), was decided to her liking. The decisions may have indirectly favored her, but they were not in favor of her direct advantage.

This cannot be construed as "bias" in the case of Ifalinovo. Rivas, 192 SCRA 183, Andarang Pro about Aquino's designation of a temporary chair of the Commission on Elections as unconstitutional withstood into the criminal affairs of the independent body. The 11 justices who participated in the case voted unanimously against her. Although Mr. Khan said Aquino appointed by her, in the case of Marcos vs. Manglapus, 177 SCRA 668, she sues by only one vote against the seven dissenters, also appointed by her, who held that her personal injustice of the petition of the Marcos to return to the country violated the Bill of Rights. In Lansdi v. Cojuangco, 225 SCRA 307, one of her appointees also remained and underscored her.

As for candidate endorsed, I simply stated when I wrote in my column of Aug. 27, 2005, on the second impeachment resolution signed that Chief Justice Hilario Davide, as follows:

"This interpretation was reached in the 74-page powered after discussion of collateral issues like separation of powers, judicial review, issue, many distinguished from party-in-interest, justiciability, and other topics already sufficiently examined in previous cases. I believe they did not favor the respondent. It sought to do the decision unless the purpose was to increase it with the efficiency of Justice Cayetano Arroyo's research staff.

"As if to bolster the leaden question who had come to the same resolution as the justices filed their own concurring opinions to further support the decision and add to the confusion... They filled all of 106 pages of the SDRA.

"Did they think that the powers in was inadequate and should be supplemented with their own wisdom? Or were they simply bored for doing nothing because they have decided all the issues raised in them and had no other work to do except watch Philippine jurisprudence?"

The concurring justices could have submitted their separate views during the deliberation for collusion in the main powers. Chief Justice Fred Ruiz Castro wrote a concurring opinion in Garcia vs. The Commission on Elections, 72 SCRA 333, and she became his left that the majority powers are insufficient on many kinds, to please Marcos. I did like a concurrence on religious freedom in the Bindang Case, 219 SCRA 256, but it was not "lengthy" unless you consider two pages too long.

My friend seeks to impress us with the present Court's caseload. But is probably unaware of the 10,000 cases the normal law justices left unattended that are laid to resolve when we took over in 1986. Additionally, there was the deluge of new cases filed with us because of the removed jurisdiction of the public to be incorporated judiciary. The members of neglected backlogs were given no periodic increases, but never said one word to refuse it. That was the reason why we had to work at home during weekends, coupled with Chief Justice Claudio Teehankee's request that we double our output, which we did, as our gift to him on his retirement.

I will also stress that we had occasion to have twice a week, in Tuesdays and Thursdays, in deliberation on the more important cases so that we felt should be resolved by the full Court. The present Court now meets en banc only on Tuesdays, possibly because it does not have to rise as hard as we were. It were had the excuse to spend many hours rehearsing the opinion they performed at Chief Justice Davide's birthday party last month. They might have devoted those delightful moments to the still seriously involved decision on the petition against Executive Order No. 464.

I have compartments is solemn, but I did not forget that I was accused of being "less than a constitutional critic" for disputing Mr. Khan's assertion that "the present Court's workload has grown heavier since the time of Justice Cruz." In fact we did not dare to be rigidus-ilan.

Finally, although this editor is locked into newsreels, I did not announce the Francisco Case as Mr. Khan suggests. It he will go to Regs. 48 (Volume 413) of the SCRA, he will find that I was merely stated. On cite, not innocently or by chance. Also, the concluding paragraph of his article should be in question marks because it was I, not he, who wrote it. But I will presume, for the sake of our friendship, that it was the proofreader's fault.

Are we in a 'coup trap'?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

TO THOSE IN THE DELIVERY who think that they have or are the saviors to the Filipino people's greatest for a better life, to them "relaxation" is the closest to any that closes military relations to Chavez ing to assemble on the government, but even enable to encourage or welcome such noises and moves, to close polls, cows or businessmen who are financing their activities, please take a reality check.

The first thing to consider is that the Filipino people, by and large, are not in the mood for help and defend, are not at all looking forward to that kind of help and defense. This is not an assertion based on anecdotal evidence or personal experience. Surveys of trust both Pulse Asia and the local Weather Station show this conclusion: the great majority of Filipinos don't want to see the return of the "rule of military rule—they are fully aware of the flaws of a democracy, but they would rather stick with it, thank you.

In their preference for democracy, Filipinos find themselves in good company, as can be Winston Churchill, who almost 60 years ago made this statement: "Not accept in the fullest sense of the word the widest and prominent will of the people, till this shrewd a gangrel expression and respect pleasure, such as we see before us, 'playing the angel,' in the French call it, and making the wants of the people do what they think is good for them, without any check or correction, is a violation of democracy. Many forms of government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those others that have been tried from time to time, but there is the broad feeling in our country that the people should rule, continuously rule, and that public opinion, expressed by all constitutional means, should shape, guide and control the actions of ministers who are their servants and not their masters."

Secondly, you pro-coup groups, must try to get away from the time warp you seem to have gotten into. Before 1986, you were living in a lovely world in the after of mounting a coup that will give you the power you seem to the point of saving the Filipino people, after all, please note that the rest of the whole world is moving away from the "culture of the coup."

And, this is in the first consideration, the world does have a reason for distancing itself from coups. An excellent source of information on this issue is Benjamin M. Pinchinat's "The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth," in which he makes a strong case for economic growth as creating an environment favorable to democracy tolerance and solidarity (and that should be income and not blended, which crop-nation does the worse. In the course of laying on his case, he brings out a number of data that should be very instructive to all of us.

Here's only the finding that supervisors around the world shows that poor economic performance (e.g., falling per capita incomes) provides a fertile environment for coups. The study showing that the probability of a country's undergoing a coup depends on both the level and recent growth of its average income. Do I need to mention that his other study showing that the probability of per capita income rising is increased and in any coup by 40 percent to 70 percent (depending on the region of the world)—but it increases by 50 percent?

African countries that experienced coups saw their per capita incomes decline by 2.6 percent in the years when the coup occurred, while the decline was only 0.8 percent in countries undergoing legitimate major changes; the rise was by 1.9 percent in years when there were no major changes. In sum, where coups are most feared because currency is by fall, the coup-plagued region has the growth in coup countries is one percent, which is far superior to the African situation, but very low compared to the average three per cent income growth.

In which the prohibited poor economic performance goads potential saviors to come out of their bunkers and take over? Maybe they can do better, after all.

Internationally, that does not seem to have been the historical experience. What is more likely to happen is that the country gets into a "coup trap"—which goes something like this: falling incomes invite coups, which generate political instability, which in turn generates poor economic performance and falling incomes, which invite coups.

A more graphic (and cynical) rendition—not as Pinchinat—could be that the incoming coup leaders, i.e., the new government, might engage in predation to relegate their opponents, which creates incentives for asset holders to support rival groups. These groups must engage in predation in order to bear the incumbent government from power and, later, for them in turn to power, then the economy takes the hit. Money lies the head that wears a crown.

The effects of a "coup trap"? Just look at Ghana, which experienced its first military coup in 1966, is over three the average income. She stands. In the next 15 years, it had five successive military governments. Income per capita in Ghana has risen by only 0.4 percent per year since 1975... Just look at Fiji, whose economy, one of coups has resulted in lower income declines and lower Chief Pacific nations to manifest among the people.

But then—could it be that we are already in a coup trap, Philippine style? God forbid.

Thinking foreign

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

Cherith Arsaate Chan, president of the Ateneo secondary Islamic booklet of Senegal.

President Arroyo, in a speech from several speech, paid tribute to the role of faith to bridging the great divide between communities and nations. "Faith is the greatest antidote to terrorism," she said. Her statement was preached when she said that "acolytes of conflict in Mindanao are finally fading away," thanks to the help of other world leaders. The bottom man opportunist in the minds of the conservative participants, with former President Ramos travelling Pope John Paul II who said, "terrorism has always to all of us the results of the structure of the human family."

* * *

Nothing benign hinders good grassroots efforts to the Philippines and Israel a way to connect to it, one way is another. For instance, former Prime Minister Willibrord Maxime of Belgium, president of the European People's Party, who is also Jan Rule elite here, recalled how he made the "important decision" to become entire a consensual, no, more or less the consecration of Mayor Mancio's LBT during his term (14 years ago). He recalled that the UEA then spoke of the presidency of Mathias, was the first benign political group to recognize GMA's assumption of office in 2001.

Former Prime Minister Carl Major Bondevik of Norway, who was supposed to appear in Manila but for early 17 hours owing to his tight schedule, described GMA as the "third dimension," the "concrete political force" between capitalism and socialism. Norway continues to support the Philippines' efforts to come up a peace agreement with the Moslems, and notes that country is at the forefront of efforts to bring the to London government and United Nations which to the non-working table.

On the other hand, Palestine's Mahmoud Abbas, former secretary general of Palestine's Muslim League, headed the "hopeful signs" in the Philippines. Among them, he noted, are the peace talks between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front with the help of the Organization of Islamic Conference, the "recent free and democratic elections in Muslim" and "the country's role in the European Union, which denies that the EU is "no longer just a Christian club."

* * *

Jose Ma. Aznar's many discourse yesterday centered on the CEO's efforts to various crucial areas to strengthen democratic institutions based on ideology and time-honored values, such as the "fundamental difference between democracy and tyranny, democracy and human rights, the also made special mention of CEO's efforts to create a benchmark in Africa, "a continent no created queers," and the challenges it faces in Latin America, such as, against regimens with "totalitarian temptations." Aznar, 51, noted that, in the despair of terrorists, democracy is beginning to take root in countries like Iraq, that he also warned of problems "in regard to the Middle East," saying he couldn't "imagine any solution of China I'll most by denial to our partners at our own terms") and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

* * *

Apostolate system Envy Valentine's Day between-wife Philippines. Be worldwide ministry dedicated to helping to other messages. Among holds in First national building program for the Tan. The program also helped many couples rebuild failing or even antagonistic relationships. In many instances, it has brought back separated couples or those who had stopped communicating with each other. This Rich Relationship workshop for 2004 is divided on Fridays evening, 8:00 to 11 and real Sunday afternoon, 9:00 to 12, at De Roble of Mercy Spiritual Center, EPD Road, Tagaytay City. For details call Fr. Jesse Cleto at 0918-862-3000 or 0917-531-0000 or 0917-531-0000 and Arlene at 0916-372-0097 and 776-1612. Fr. Ben and Shirley at 0918-443-0500 and 0918-971-9748. All calls are treated confidentially.

Songs and their times

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I hear the train a comin' / It's comin' round the bend and I ain't seen it all / I can't wait to see the look on your face when / You look / I'm stuck in Miami Beach / and you keep dragging on / And that train keeps a movin' on down to Key de Toro.

When I was just a baby my mama told me: "Son, always be a good boy / don't ever play with guns." But I shot a man in Reno / just to watch him die / What I hear the whistle moan / I hear the train a comin' / It's comin' round the bend and I ain't seen it all / I can't wait to see the look on your face when / You look / I'm stuck in Miami Beach / and you keep dragging on / And that train keeps a movin' on down to Key de Toro.

—Johnny Cash, "Folsom Prison Blues"

ACCORDING TO THE CHRONOLOGY OF "FOLSOM Prison Blues," the singer of Johnny Cash starting the song, "I hear the train a comin'," was in his cell. Cash's wife Jane Carter, "Folsom Prison Blues" was written during Cash's stint with the law in Germany. A live concert shows Cash being mobbed by inmates' second prisoners in a Folsom prison. Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues," becoming its title from a prison movie that Cash watched to stay in Folsom Jane, for echoing the composer's own feelings of being capable by his military superiors.

Perhaps, no one is more surprised by Folsom than, whom Cash hailed a "comeback concert" after years of battling addiction to amphetamines and struggling with his own rocky personal life. The live-recording of Johnny and June Carter Cash's Grammy-winning album, and one of the best-selling albums of all time, ostensibly marshalling Cash as an icon of American country and country music.

Cash's life, beautifully from that prison concert, back to Cash's hard-scrabble childhood in Arkansas and up to that point, make up the heart of the film. It is a heart-rending chronicle, one filled with drama, pain, and, of course, music.

* * *

Walking from the theater, Cash had the first "classic" latter-birth "dialogue" in this part of the world. In this, the confidence and dance with Arthur's son on monetary development and on women and human rights issues, capped by the first formal meeting of CEO Ann Arsobo, the counterpart of CEO Enrique, whose newly elected chair is "Bai, Isaac's Thalcio Omawaru.

* * *

The global breakfast in Galapagos was the fruit of a Philippine initiative first broached by Ignacio de Venecia as a way to counter the political conflicts of the world. GMA proposed that the CEO be the conference modeled on the Boston City three years ago and in UN President George Bush during her state visit to Washington three years ago. The initiative culminated in the big meeting's challenges at the UN during the 58th foundation anniversary preparatory by GMA.

The Manila anesthesia dialogue has drawn leaders from various world religions—in the best spirit of ecumenism of Pope John Paul II. The dialogue was attended by Buddhist monks of Cambodia and Thailand, and prominent Muslim leaders from Pakistan, Jordan, a Jewish rabbi from Israel, Hindu leader Dr. Shivarasa Subramaniam of Malaysia, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Vidal and Bishop Oscar Tendero of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, and Fr. Bonifacio Miko Alcantara, Jesuit Jail Center.

What's the language of our students' dreams?

I AM FROM BICOL AND THE product of a bilingual education. However, I would like to elaborate that I can speak of it as entitled, without a "linguistic identity a no." At 38, I know that my mind, heart and "tongue" are in their right places.

This is probably because I was born in a family of economic readers who enjoyed me to it with me by of literature, from Bicolano songs and folklore to Filipino short-fair-tragedy and Shakespeare. I

never wanted for books while I was growing up in kapitbahayang made it possible for me to watch movies and hear all language and read in the beauty, rhythms and nuances of words.

However, neither my family nor my teachers taught me to think that one language was better than another. I grew up believing that each language has its own genius and I am proud that I can speak, understand, read and write in languages, Bicolano, Filipino and English, with equal proficiency. Scott Fitzgerald was right that "there are no permanently secure languages, only languages more or less secure" and I am pushing for English to be the sole medium of instruction in our schools.

It is not hard to see why they are doing this, considering how much the call center business has expanded and the decays admission testers introduce to back every single Filipino graduates into respectable labor. It is understandable that Inglish is being used to make Filipinos fit into the global economy.

The proponents of this bill cite the dismal performances of our students in recent national and international tests and international education surveys to show how our English proficiency has sunk. But have they asked why millions of our elementary and high school students are poorly performing in so simple daily tests written in English? Is it really a question of what they know or is it because they have difficulties with the language in which the questions are written? Perhaps the reason many of our students are not doing well is students tend both in English is their lack of skills in that language and not a lack of education. Or should we be reminded that such tests are couched in Filipino and they will do not make the mark.

And perhaps our students' proficiency in English has declined not because of the incompetence of their teachers or the lack of encouragement to learn it in their homes. The real reason for the declining proficiency in English may be that we have a sense of ownership of the language. English is not the language they speak at home, in the street, at work or with friends; and so they have no use that they have as much right to it as any other student somewhere in the world and that it is there for the taking. English remains irrelevant to their lives, and learning English is a chore, not a joy. They are not encouraged to think that they own it and that they themselves decide that they need it and they want to master it or they can use it for their own reasons and purposes.

Before they dismiss the language of our schools, our lawmakers should first consider the realities of our students' lives and not merely accept as fact the notion of certain surveys that English is the problem. Only then can a solution be worked out behind. Language planning must be ultimately for empowerment. Paolo Freire says educational empowerment for students comes when, asked by schools, their own conversation comes into matters nothing them to negotiate their learning, collaborate in educational encounters, and engage in critical dialogue with teachers and with each other.

English as a medium of instruction, like any other language used in the Philippines, possesses this liberating potential, and this potential can be unlocked if the government, lawmakers and other interest groups combined their resources from books in English merely as a source of economic power. Instead, English should be looked at as language of empowerment. Only then will students be awakened to our students' value that use it to look critically at their place in the greater political, economic and social order. Then they can choose whether to use and enrich the language as we. The linguist R.G. Waldeen once said, "You are proficient in a language to the degree that you can question, analyze, reason, hunch it to say well, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form."

Before submitting to the dictates of capitalist interests, our lawmakers should first guarantee that education remains a "social contract" and promote not one language over another but social justice above all. The noble intellectuals in public policy and education from the Philippines must take into account the poverty students as equal than to achievers. This can be done by ensuring that the teaching and learning processes and the language to which they happen actually promote equality through wider access to schooling, providing genuine access to knowledge, celebrating diversity, and individualization and giving students the chance to learn in the language they are most in the end all our students in the process of becoming persons, not just dependable human capital.

A comprehensive language policy in the Philippines must embrace the fact that there exist 100 languages are spoken in millions of Filipino homes. Educators and parents and policymakers must work together to ensure that no child in this country is left behind because of his or her language. We must see that our students are taught and not the "dictionaries" our students bring from their home languages to their schools. Literacy learning has been proven to be easiest when most serious in the student's mother tongue is provided first, especially during the first three grades with option to continue learning in that language in higher grades.

Earlier highly individualized bilingual programs will necessitate heavy funding from the government. What is needed then is empowered university-wide academic language units to a national budget that is more focused toward education and not a law that has the potential to rob our students, parents and communities of their right to learn in the language of their choice by prescribing one language as the source of knowledge.

When it comes to educational policies and practices, the government, educational institutions and political leaders must listen to the students. In deciding the medium of instruction in our schools, the students should make their own choices. Their voices must be heard. There must speak not only for urban Filipinos but also those in the regions and rural indigenous groups. Parents and educators should be consulted, too. And their views must be incorporated into the decision-making process.

Ultimately, the issue of language of instruction will work best in the Philippines, perhaps we should ask the question: What is the language of the Filipino student's dream? From the answer to that question, the government, schools and communities can work to create greater opportunities for our students to dream by using the language in which they choose.

Ma. M. Bautista, 28, is a graduate student of language teaching at the University of the Philippines College of Education in Diliman.

YOUNG BLOOD

Ana M. Jamaloodin

We want to know what the young are thinking about. Tell us your thoughts on current issues? Re-articulate some problems from the newspapers that you're concerned with and below.—Ed.

Germans in the Philippines

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Kendi L. Harper

THE GERMAN CLUB IS SET TO CELEBRATE ITS centennial anniversary next year, a grand feat despite a rather lowkey spanning decades and perhaps even centuries, for fact about its most much on Filipino consciousness. This despite the fact that Germans may still occupy third rung in Philippine society, according to a 1994 survey, behind the Chinese and Americans, but just ahead of the mestizos.

Quizzing over the amount of influence of the Philippines on Germany, or its lack of, is the topic of the day for other reasons external to us. There is the government to government and that supported in an cultural shopping, urbanization, erosion around, etc. that makes you wonder why hasn't there come. Are we still so lost and out of sight? Maybe not in Spain, but we know what happened to that one, and then there's the German federal government's continuing investigations into the Marcoses, support from the business of Imelda R. Thank to which Imelda is perpetual the Democratic Club and Germans in Cebu or continuous hospitals like St. Paul's in Iloilo and Our Lady of Lourdes in Sta. Mesa, Manila, and St. John Bosco Technical School in Dadiar. There are foundations like the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. And here are we, a little second to the last on the economic totem pole of Asia. Filipinos being in general not reflective enough, we are not about to ask why.

Maybe we should ask why. Maybe we should. Instead, if I don't particularly well know that among Switzerland (Engelbert) once were three Germans, the first to ever set foot on Philippine soil. Here, Germans are the second largest European group and the fourth largest foreign investment

Clearing house for CTPL deals

THIS REFERS TO THE COLUMN OF NOEL CRUZ, titled "A third proposal for a new CTPL system," (PDI, 1/23/06).

The problem during the past years is that the amount of sums collected by the government vis-à-vis the total number of vehicles do not tally. It appears that the government has been shortchanged for a considerable period of time.

I find it impossible to believe that there are 8y-by-night insurers. The Insurance Commission maintains a list of licensed or authorized insurance companies as well as insurers who have been issued cease and desist orders. The Land Transportation Office must have this list. If, by very least, where the CTPL is presented (a specific case of cover COC), it should be able to check if the insurer of the COC is in that list. Having said that, there is no chance for a fly-by-night insurer to slip a spurious COC past the LTO.

What has actually been happening is that licensed but unregistered insurance companies have not been reporting some or none of the COCs that they issue. It would not be far-fetched to believe that these same companies are probably in cahoots with some LTO personnel in selling these unreported COCs. Since the users (the ist three policies are not required to the government, there is money to spare for these jobbing cabals.

The insurance commissioner's proposal for a clearing house is supported by the association of insurance companies. The clearing house will see to it that all issued COCs are accounted for and the corresponding taxes are remitted to the government.

The Government Service Insurance System's proposal to take over the compulsory third party liability (CTPL) business from the private sector not only contravenes the GSIS law, which limits its insurance activities to government-owned or -controlled enterprises, it also goes against the Philippine Constitution which provides for a free and open market devoid of government intervention in areas well served by the private sector.

I cannot help but laugh when Cruz suggested that "8-Dis GSIS would invest only portion (from 5 to 6 data) for claimants." The GSIS is lucky that government entities cannot choose their own insurers, otherwise many of them would end up migrating.

On the transportsector company that would like to run the CTPL business for the insurance industry for the information of Cruz, that company's name is Road Asset Managed Services Inc. or Ramsi. It is a newly created company with no track record to speak of but with plenty of bubble to whip up a frenzy.

I understand that the company is looking at 20 percent of the premiums as their fees. That's roughly P720 million yearly out of an estimated P2.7 billion business. Not bad for a start-up company with no history to boot.

—JAYSON S. LACSON,
Managing Director
Lacson and Lacson Insurance Brokers Inc., Rangoody Tower, 293 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City

Doctor who serves as a low-profile, anti-poverty warrior

SO A FILIPINO WHO HAS BEEN living in foreign shores for the past years, I am concerned about the reported departure of medical practitioners from the Philippines for so-called "greener pastures." In a month, hospitals are closing down, not to mention, medical schools.

Adversely affected by all the continuing exodus of professionals (if other fields as well) are our bare minimum country-wide rehabilitation and educational needs would no longer be adequately provided for. This is the result of our country being in economic shambles. With poverty enveloping us in the face, we are left with no recourse but to fend for ourselves and work abroad.

However, it has come to my attention that in the heart of Davao City, there is one doctor-metaphysician, Dr. Jeff Ho, who has been conducting, without fail, free clinics on Sundays. From the latest information I gathered, Dr. Ho is now also back with an early morning radio program, "Consultation On The Air," after a similar program of his on a prime time evening slot went off the air.

With Dr. Ho, senior citizens enjoy free consultations anytime of the week, while paying patients avail of the city's most affordable consultation fee. There's also his Pro-Masa Pharmacy, which sells medicines at very low prices.

This one multifaceted and soft-hearted doctor opened my eyes to the challenge of actively helping alleviate the effects of poverty. Dr. Ho's service to the less fortunate would make a wonderful, inspiring life story.

By the way, I would like to thank the bosses for its distinct less reporting of the week. Also, the paper's editorial are objective and fearless. I never miss reading them.

—WINFRED ANTON,
[illegible]

LETTERS

Bold show of nationalism

THE ADVERTISEMENT OF THE Consumer Of Peace Watch (COPW), urgently appealing to our leaders to temporarily set aside duties to clothes change and, instead, to give the highest priority to pending economic and financial reforms (PDI, 1/27/06), was not only a bold demonstration of Bataan's (Corregidor's) nationalism but also very timely and relevant call.

The COPW's proposal to hold national elections in May 2007, after an honest cleanup of our electoral processes and the Commission on Elections' (Comelec) top brass, must be done to avoid a people's uprising, a possibility that Archbishop Oscar Cruz has warned about. This concern, I believe, is shared by various nationalistic and peace advocate groups, by political, spiritual, civil society groups, and now, by the more than a million victims of hunger-provoked calamities.

These victims of the pro-rural industry are peasants and students, many of whom have stopped studying. Many more will be forced to follow suit in the coming years. All of them are very, very emotional. These victims of corruption-fraud manoeuvres and greed, I am afraid, are ready to join the uprising in one way or the other, although in a peaceful but forceful manner, just to get the education they are longing for and to get restitution for their sufferings.

They are also committed to ad-vocate good corporate governance and ordinance promotion, and to fight corruption in government so their contributions to society to restore law and moral order.

—LEVI C. BALBINO,
10 Sampaguita St., Town & Country Executive Village, Antipolo City

Some corrections to the AUPP news

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO THE news report "Public floats concession on run-of-mill," (PDI, 1/21/06) First of all, we thank the bosses for featuring the "Aid to the Upgraded People Program (AUPP). Secondly, we wish to make some corrections to some details in the report.

The Cadena de Amor Brotherhood Center should be Cristo' Dimares Peregrino Center (CDRC).

We also wish to add that the Sabang village community in Mauban, Quezpon-ha Valley, is just one of the 43 barangays in the four Mauban municipalities benefiting from the two-year program funded by the European Union Delegation to the European Commission to the Philippines.

The AUPP is being implemented by the CDRC through its organization in Mauban, in collaboration with the Mauban people's call for true and lasting peace in their communities.

As currently cited in the bases on report, the Mauban community as well as the rest of the 42 barangay barangays, has long been victimized by militarization, which has been the government's response to insurgency and to the opposition to the supposedly developmental projects, whose real aim is the displacement of local communities.

—REY E. PALACIO,
Research and Public Information Department,
Citizens' Disaster Response Center, 73-A Times St., West Triangle Homes, QC

Fooling people through Council of State

PHILIP VIC INQUIRER READERS, appreciate the differing views appearing in the Opinion section, sometimes, rending those pro-Arroyo opinions fluffs our senses and actually make us intelligent. Take the case of one column titled "Elected officials should attend Council meet," (PDI, 1/19/06) Yes, we know that, under ordinary circumstances, elected officials are duty-bound to attend the call of their duly-elected head. But these are not ordinary times.

To date, the issue of legitimacy has not been resolved even half-way. Only elected representatives of the people should not stoop to the calls of public officials who do not have a clear mandate from the people.

The Council of State meeting charade reminds the premises of duly elected (legitimate) leaders (past and present) become without them, it would be nothing but a meeting of crooks. We are reminded of the saying: "You may fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you can never fool all of the people all of the time."

—NERALD SOLIMANO,
Tanauan, Alb

A plea to Corazon Aquino

MOST FILIPINOS ARE AWARE to condemnations. We just re-mint mark even when we are annoyed and avoid those who annoy us. Did Cory Aquino demonstrate this Filipino trait when she declined to extend the Council of State? I believe so. Some and that this former First, dear, the mother of our country is not interested in finding the answers to our nation's problems.

It seems she's only interested in telling the nation who is blame for the problems it faces. I would like to implore Ms. Aquino to take her rightful place among the leaders of our country, and help find out how to save our people from the economic and social abyss we have fallen into.

Your country needs you again Ms Aquino, please heed its call.

—JOSE RAE BAPTISTA,
joserae.baptista@yahoo.com

Erratum

In the Jan. 24 issue, the editorial "Unequal relationship" misstated the First Indian of Foreign Secretary Romulo. The correct name is Alberto, not Roberto. Our apologies.—Ed.

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Ombudsman Building, Agham Road, North Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN SECURITY REQUIREMENT OF 30 SECURITY GUARDS FOR CY 2006-2007

The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN, through its Bids and Awards Committee intends to apply sum of ₱8,100,000.00 (GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS PESOS ₱8,100,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) from the 1%% Approved Budget to implement the 1st Official Of The Ombudsman Security Requirement of 30 Security Guards for CY 2006-2007. This invitation is issued to all eligible contractors, duly licensed and accredited by the agency.

The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN now invites interested Bids from eligible bidders to APPLY for "The Ombudsman Security Requirement of 30 Security Guards for CY 2006-2007". Delivery of documents is required within the period of ten (10) days of the posting requirements. The submission of an eligible bidder is conditional to receive List of the Bidding Documents, BA.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part 2 (IRR-2) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations duly accredited by the Philippine Government Procurement Policy Board belonging to category of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184). Only Bids from bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section 23 of the Bidding Documents. The submitted and bid documents (LCB) shall comprise in the envelope duplicate copies in order to facilitate [illegible] requirements in the technical and financial requirements of the project as specified in the Bid Bulletin. All bidders should provide proof that they are legally and technically capable to undertake the contract, to the satisfaction of the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), as specified in the Bidding Documents. The BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the OFFICE OF THE Bids and Awards Committee Bidding Documents at the address given below during [illegible] and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ₱1,000.00.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ₱1,000.00.

The OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN reserves the right to reject any or all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of R.A. 9184, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

ROBERT E. KALILIS
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Office of the Ombudsman, Bldg., Agham Road
North Triangle, Quezon City
Tel. No.: [illegible]
Fax: [illegible]
Email: [illegible]
Website: [illegible]

Atty. ROBERT E. KALILIS
Deputy Special Prosecutor, OSP

Across the NATION

Text or your feedback: inquirer.net/nation@inquirer.com.ph; 2/F Globe1 or 181 Street, Ayalaland Globe: Tony Bergonia

SHELTERED
A farmer gathers corn in the window of his home in the hinterlands of Bukidnon, North Carabao, appearing apprehensive of the photographer taking her picture.

Police say 3 dead in Isabela floods

SAGAY, ISABELA—THREE PEOPLE were killed in floods spawned by heavy rains from tropical depression Agaton in Isabela, army police official in Cagayan Valley said.

Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, regional police director and chair of the regional disaster coordinating council, said the victims drowned in the towns of San Mariano and Ilagan, also in Cauayan City.

Soriano identified one of the victims as Reggie Carlos, a farmer in Barangay East, San Mariano.

In Nueva Ecija, the entire growing industry in the province suffered its worst disaster in recent years after more than 2,000 hectares of onion plants were submerged in floodwaters.

The destroyed crops, mostly in farms in Bongabon town and San Jose City, were either about to be harvested in a few weeks or were in the bulb formation stage.

Bongabon is the acknowledged "onion basket" of the country, supplying the market with at least 25 million kilograms of red onion and yellow garlic in the province.

San Jose City, on the other hand, leads in the production of the bunch type of onion called the red dublo variety, locally known as muntayong.

"There's no more hope. Our entire onion crop is finish," Bongabon Mayor Isaias Cuevas told the Inquirer in a cellphone interview.

She said only about 450 hectares of onion plants in Bongabon remained standing. Gamille estimated that production losses could reach more than P7 million.

Also blamed for the unexpected destructive tide destroyed by the December 2004 flash floods for the recent flooding in the town.

In Pampanga, the Pampanga River overflowed on Friday and submerged at least 20 villages in Candaba and San Simon, police reports said.

In Candaba, at least 2,000 hectares newly planted to rice, corn and watermelons were under two to four feet of water.

Mayor Jerry Pelayo estimated the losses at P25 million.

He said this was the fourth time that farmers have the brunt of floods since August but now he asked the Department of Agriculture to provide seedlings. *Reports from Amalia Rugas and Estrella Olpoc, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Fernando Gatdula and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Interviews from Bicol*

Army, MILF clash as talks draw near

DATU UNSAY, MAGUINDANAO—CLASHES BETWEEN government soldiers and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels continued here yesterday as the government and rebel negotiators prepare to resume peace talks in Malaysia.

Col. Jerry Acierdera, commander of the Army's 604th Infantry Brigade, said an undetermined number of MILF fighters were killed or injured in the clashes that took place in the vicinity of a village that the rebels have earlier occupied.

There was no casualty on the government side, he said.

"We have cleared our primary targets. The rebels threatened to destroy barrios another road project of the provincial government. We cannot afford to just sit down and watch them," Acierdera said.

Acierdera told the Inquirer that about 600 MILF rebels abandoned 800 ha in Barangay Talitay and transferred to nearby Mt. 900, some 3 km southwest of the community that they seized.

He said the MILF wanted to expand its territories, which now only its fighters occupied several villages, including that of nearby town.

On Thursday evening, a clash between the police and MILF rebels also took place in nearby Mamasapano town, where two rebels were killed, according to Ismael Ingal, Ahmad Mamalidis, chief of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police.

But the MILF said three killed were civilians caught in the crossfire when policemen fired at MILF positions.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, also denied Acierdera's claim that the guerrillas were expanding territory in Maguindanao. He said Mt. 224 is one of the eight MILF camps recognized by the government.

"We are trying to find a peaceful solution to the conflict and we don't want wars. I believe the law does not affect the rebels," Kabalu said of the wanted rebels.

The encounters in Maguindanao broke out on Wednesday when soldiers and policemen engaged in in various radio after two MILF factions clashed over a land conflict.

Government said it believed conflict between commanders Abdullah Wahid and Sabra Ilem escalated even made worse by strong standing family feud.

Intelligence said the fighting began about 10 a.m. when Ali Ibrahim of Wahid encountered Bantu per Sahiron in Sharif Aguak town.

He said a massive evacuation ensued.

Intelligence said the clashes eventually spilled over to nearby Ampatuan, Abdullah Sangki, Mamasapano, and Datu Hoffer town.

Kabalu said information coordinating him indicated that group led by Wahid was that of Wahid and Gabb.

Kabalu said Wahid was trying to resolve a land conflict with the Ampatuans and, "had the approval of the MILF leadership."

Ceasefire monitor Ampatuan is said to be related to Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan and ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Darylle Salcedo and Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Roundup

'Kill PNCC' plot feared

TALAMBA CITY—An activists organization of workers, consumer rights advocates and public transport operators disclosed the allegedplot of landowners to block the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) from repairing its franchise to run the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) and the South Luzon Expressway (SLEx). The Laguna-based Road Users Protection Advocates (Ruap) said the alleged plot to prevent the PNCC consortium from rehabilitating the roads could be initially traced to the death of the government-owned construction company. The 30-year franchise of the PNCC will expire on April 30, 2005. *Alvin Elamo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 wounded in holdup

SURIGAO CITY—Two armed men holdup a Zamboanga-bound Ceres Liner bus on Jan. 23 at Barangay Rosario in Bayugan, Surigao del Norte police said. Two suspects forcedtheir bus conductor to flee (Ceres Liner Co., Inc.) at Barangay Dinkung in the City of San Fernando. Two more suspects rode the bus in Cabadbaran, Pampanga, while the fifth suspect boarded it at Barangay Tiga in Buenavista, Bahuan. At least during a running stop at Barangay Bonbon six of the suspects drew the gun and shot two conductor Manuelito B. Estabal in the stomach. It made passengers panicked in the bus. The bus officer escaped, armed with handguns and a hand grenade. Bote snatched robbing passengers of valuables. *Danilo Arapa, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

1 dead in grenade blast

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—A man was killed while 10 others were wounded in a grenade explosion at an outdoor cockpit in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato provincebright at Jan. 19, police said. The Lake Sebu police said it is suspect that Rhon Chipo, an activists of Sitio Lobo in Barangay Tasi, was holding the grenade when it exploded. Suspect was killed on the spot while the other wounded persons rushed to the town hospitals in Dalton Kidkaduad in South Cotabato. Investigators said hand grenade is the favorite of the rebel and lawless group in the area. *Agustin Jovic, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Natural health mission

THE BOVINA Diabetic Center, composed of medical doctors with integrated of homeopathic community, will conduct on a natural health program on diabetic diseases prevention in Bicol provinces. In a statement, the center said the mission aimed to "reach, teach and heal" people, particularly those in the Bicol areas, on natural, practical and scientific health modalities. The team will be headed by Dr. Sidney Villoria, who will lecture on diet, massage, hydrotherapy, energy balancing and lifestyle adjustment. The health team will cover Dumaguete City (Jan. 28), Bacon City (Feb. 1), Central Samar City (Feb. 3), Iloilo City (Feb. 12), San Fernando City in Pampanga (Feb. 26) and Tabaco City (Feb. 27).

Awards for pro-youth execs

SANTIAGO CITY— The National Youth Commission (NYC) and the National Movement of Young Legislators are spearheading the recognition of outstanding legislators for youth development. Local legislators who have authored youth-oriented legislations or their respective officials may now apply for the 9th Search Konsensong Kabataan (Consensus of Youths) Award, Richard Alice Balagtas, NYC Commissioner-at-Large, said the award is open to all sanggunians, vice mayors, board members, councilors, barangay captains and barangay kagawads who have authored youth-oriented legislations or resolutions. Applications or nominations must be submitted to the NYC office at 49 Pinto Road corner Bolipo, 3313 Cauayan, Quezon City.

Dead dugong found near Rapu-Rapu mine site

By Blanche S. Rivera, with Mandy and Bobby Caballes, PDI S. Luzon Bureau

A PREGNANT DUGONG WAS FOUND DEAD in Rapu-Rapu, Albay Wednesday, raising speculations that the endangered marine mammal could have died due to the contamination of the waters off the island, site of two recent mine spills in one of Australian mining operations.

The dugong, measuring about seven feet and weighing around 150 kilograms, was found by fishermen and brought to Sitio Gogon in Barangay Poblacion, one of the three barangays of the mining site of the Australian Lafayette Mining Inc. (LMI).

Lawyer Isidro Sarmiento, corporate secretary and director of LMI, said the dugong could have died from toxic leaks from a tailings dam in nearby.

Sarmiento said there were indications it was bludgeoned.

In a statement, the LMI said it was unlikely that the dugong was caught off Rapu-Rapu because the island is not known to have dugongs.

"The mine spill in Rapu-Rapu last October could not have been the cause of the dugong's death—assuming without granting the dugong lived around the island...because if that were the case, smaller fish would have died first," it said.

Fr. Edino Bagsican, assistant parish priest and spokesperson of the Rapu-Rapu-based Sagip Isla, said residents found the dead dugong between 5 and 6 a.m. on Wednesday, causing consternation in the normally-sleepy town.

"This is the first time we found a dead dugong on our island," Bagsican said in a phone interview.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said initial reports revealed that the dugong was caught by a fisherman and brought to the island, but it was not done whether the dugong was captured dead or alive.

Lafayette's P1.4-billion project caused two mine spills in Rapu-Rapu in October last year, spilling cyanide into nearby coastal but got out to the Pacific Ocean, a supposedly path of marine mammals and other cetaceans.

The dugong, sometimes known as a sea cow, is an endangered mammal in the Philippines.

The Provincial Action and Wildlife Bureau said it would send a team of veterinarians to conduct an autopsy of the dugong to determine the cause of its death, but Bagsican said the dugong was buried Thursday.

He brought samples of the dugong's blood, flesh and intestine to the Ateneo de Manila University researchers for tests.

The dugong's fetus was taken by Jessi Duran, a researcher from Sarangani Involved to the care of whale sharks in the province, for possible study.

LMI said it would agree to an investigation by competent third parties to settle the issue, urging people not "put blame on the wrong parties."

Bacon, chair of the Bantayan Multipurpose Bluedancing Task Force, said the discovery of the dead dugong was unfortunate because it came at a time when his group was trying to calm down residents who suffered from a ban on non-sparentfrom the cyanide spills.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO RE-BID
TRANSFER OF NFA STOCKS THRU VOYAGE CHARTER

VOLUME SCHEDULE FOR SEA SHIPMENT

DESTINATION Province	Port	Lot No.	Maximum Quantity/Lot (MT)	Freight Rate/kg	Approved Budget for the Contract per Lot
Camarines Sur	Pasacao	1	10,000	500.00	5,000,000.00
Albay	Albay	2	10,000	500.00	5,000,000.00
TOTAL			20,000		10,000,000.00

Antonio Nakpil Street
Mandaluyong City
Metro Manila 1550

Philippine Daily Inquirer
No. 185 Salcedo Street
Legaspi Village
Makati City
Metro Manila 1229

INQUIRER Visayas

E-mail: ... | Editor Joe Burgonio
Bureau Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Why Cebu City is a big Chinatown

By Gerie Sanson-Bagares
Contributor

AS THE CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR MAKES more fully, Cebu City begins to sway to the rhythm of the Lion's Dance.

But a visitor will wonder where its Chinatown is. Searching the surface, he will not find one, frustrating even the most passionate traveler who sees all signs of Chinese presence yet finds no trace of a Chinatown.

Cebu, in truth, has had two Chinatowns. This is history for the direct trade between southern China and the island of Cebu existed since at least a century before the Spanish conquest.

It was the increased opportunities on the island's trade and commerce that brought Chinese settlers to its shores, especially at the onset of the Galleon Trade in which Cebu was involved from 1565 to 1604. The Galleon Trade fully established the Chinatown's order as a subdivision, a role whose potential for profit proved irresistible.

The Parian

The early Chinatown was called "Parian" in the Philippines. A group of 200 traders and artisans, they were herded to their own ghetto in Cebu ("La Ciudad de Santisimo Nombre de Jesus") took more solid shape as a Spanish city in 1569.

The Parian was called the "Port of" and built just outside the Spanish-ruled like the one of Manila.

By 1586, the citizens of Parian, led by some principales, were baptized to Catholics, thus creating the Cebu community. By virtue of their new faith, they were more free from the "infidel" unconverted Chinese and could marry the natives.

The Chino-creoles, their wives (Mestizas or Mestizas, according to one account), for many years remained in the Parian around the church, the Iglesia de San Juan Bautista, was erected.

After it ran for the convenience of the Chinese as a principal threat to national security among other prejudices toward them, the Parian would later evaporate. Cebu's Chinese natives well into the 20th century. But many times, their population from the Philippines was reduced.

Chinese complicity in the British occupation of Manila (1762-64) nearly incurred severe. The wrecking of Manila by the Spaniards led to a long absence. Chinese disapora. In aftermath, colonist historian Michael Cullinane observes of late 18th century Cebu, "swelled in the Parian forswearing an absence exclusively Chinese sexual [ex-community], nearly devoid of Chinese."

The Chinese nucleus soon lost literacy of Chinese, a race soon blossoms blame on the acculturation by their non-Chinese mothers. At the end of Spanish rule, they were a "bourgeoisie" group, cultured by bilds that denied and repressed their Chinese legacy.

By legal fiction, Spanish law accepted them to distant from the Chinese and they were accorded the privileges of the Indios. Hispanized, they were lauded in their own ghetto as Cebu ("La Ciudad de Santisimo Nombre de Jesus") took more solid shape as a Spanish city in 1569.

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By legal fiction, Spanish law accepted them to distant from the Chinese and they were accorded the privileges of the Indios. Hispanized, they were lauded in their own ghetto as the context of colonial discourse as "Real Chinese-ness" they might have lost did not, however, include the link for commerce.

In the 19th century they were nearly the most dominant force economically and governmentally, and many activities opened throughout the province and the region.

The Parian produced Cebu's first identifiable elite, according to Cullinane. These were the elite whose names still resonate today: Osmeña, Velez, Go and Velez, among others.

When former Cebu governor Emilio "Lito" Osmeña said that "the whole of Cebu is a Chinatown" and that "there is no family in Cebu who does not have Chinese blood," he might well mean those of the Old Parian.

The Lutaos

The opening of the Cebu port to international trade in 2000 has, toward the economic growth of the city Pampanga came to increasing numbers, attracted by the prospect of brisk business. Foremost among them were the Chinese, but unlike the old days, they were no longer confined to the Parian for the two-hour ferry ride from Cebu City.

THE OLD Plaridel Street in downtown Cebu City where the building of the Ludo and Luym, a super trading firm, once stood. Ludo and Luym is now a multimillion-peso international trading firm, producer of various food products and owner of a 12-story building in downtown Cebu City.

Instead, the Chinese gravitated closer to where the new action was, the Lutaos area close to the port. Some gained by e-commerce boom, the port was equipped to accommodate big ships, unlike the container ships used to be the lifeblood of the Parian. There are about sixteen seats giving them orders up to 6K and lease by new companies.

Another location that is the rise of the new Chinese immigrants initially settled at the south side of the Fuente San Pedro, they formed one along the coast of the present-day M.C. Briones Street up to the Lutaos public market directly west. Initial focused Elizalde Lane, and two feeder roads like Plaridel.

This number of Lutaos Emulsified became the new Chinatown. Unlike the Parian, it was not a closed or developed. Instead to the divide-and-rule dictum of the Spaniards.

The Chinese population in Cebu reached a critical mass (calculated as it was by bloodline ties) and neither transport modern begin-ning in the 1980s that it required no road was created for them, the Camino de Chinos. The prefix or "alliance-paying cooperatives ... organized by ethnicity rather than by place of residence" might have been greatly instrumental in dispersing the Chinese throughout Cebu City wherever business took them, then they would be.

It was in the Lutaos Emulsified Chinatown that Cebu saw the emergence of its most distinguished Chinese family, the Gos. Founders immigrants late in the 19th century, they have pursued their initial modest gains into a considerable fortune. Or several fortunes.

The scions of the Go patriarch, Don Pedro Singson-Go Tiaoco, are some of today's tycoons in Philippine business—the Gokongwei of the hotel, airline, and publishing concern; the Gotianuy of the

DON LUCIO Uy Hoonsiu, Cebu's first Chinese Consul

DON PEDRO Singson-Go Tiaoco, the Chinese patriarch from whom scions of today's "taipan" in Philippine business have descended: The Gokongwei of the hotel, airline, and publishing concern; the Gotianuy of the school and mall; and the Gaisanos of retailing.

school and mall; and the Gaisanos of retailing.

Postscript

Of Cebu, its one big Chinatown, one can look at the Lutao-Escuela model for answer. The clue lies in its organic, unplanned development.

Cebu, then as now, was a magnet to the Chinese for the rural and town-centered economic opportunities it presents.

In 1900, the Americans colonizers drew plans to improve its port. By 1937, Cebu surpassed its long-time rival Iloilo as premier city of the South.

At the city grew, its Chinese populations also burgeoned, spilling over beyond the port area and encroaching into residential zone. Chinese neighborhoods. They were to be found in all the major markets from Talamban to T. Padilla, or in business spots close to the border of Mabolo.

Indeed, it was in the 2000 census that Cebu itself became a Chinatown when boundaries of citizenry were blurred in the pursuit of business opportunities. The Chinese established their own schools, churches, associations, hospitals, chamber of commerce, and family associations.

They also formed their own chamber of commerce and a fire brigade to complete the period display of their identity.

As the 21st century nudges in its infancy, one finds the Cebu Chinese community in the midst and expansion of built-in-prem places but in the big picture of a dynamic metropolis.

BCDA
Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
Construction of Concrete Breakwater in the Provinces of Bataan and Zambales
Name of Contract | Brief Description | Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) | Source of Funding
Construction of Concrete Breakwater | Bataan: Breakwater Phase I; Breakwater Phase II; Zambales: Breakwater Phase I; Breakwater Phase II | ₱ 100,000,000.00 | GOP
Bataan Breakwater Phase I: Php 50,000,000.00
Bataan Breakwater Phase II: Php 50,000,000.00
Zambales Breakwater Phase I: Php 50,000,000.00
Zambales Breakwater Phase II: Php 50,000,000.00
BASES CONVERSION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Bonifacio Technology Center
31st Street corner 2nd Avenue
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City
Telephone Numbers: 815-9199 loc. 2201 to 2205; 840-4850 loc. 2201 to 2205
Fax: 840-4850 loc. 2201 to 2205

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Jacinto Lopez Regional Drive, Pampanga City
Tel. No. (045) 435-1427 & 435-1428 • Fax No. (045) 435-2000
Website: www.nfa.gov.ph
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Repair/rehab. of NFA Pampanga Provincial Office
Repair of the roofing and ceiling portions of the Bldg.
The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY-Central Luzon Regional Office (NFA-CLRO), Concepcion Dayrit cor. Jacinto Lopez Regional Drive, Dolores, Capas, Tarlac invites all qualified contractors to apply for and if Php 1,000,000.00 being the approved budget for the Contract (ABC) to participate in the contract for the Rehabilitation of Provincial Office (NFA Compound, Dolores, Pampanga. Completion of the Works is required by One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days.
The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY will refer for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOI) from prospective Bidders to apply for eligibility by the Rehabilitation of Provincial Office. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract. Those considered a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC; and key personnel and equipment likened to the Eligibility Forms) complete for the above-cited. All the contractors interested may obtain more LOIs at the NFA Secretariat and secure the Eligibility Documents therefrom. Submissions for eligibility will be conducted on a "pass/fail" basis. Only those who have passed the eligibility check will be invited to participate the Bidding Documents.
All participants applying to the Eligibility Statement and Screening that Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Submission of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the minimum provisions of R.A. 9184 and its corresponding Rules and Regulations (IRR).
The schedule of bidding activities are as follows (but Non-Exclusive):
Activity | Date | Time
Issuance of eligibility forms | Feb. 01 to 28, 2006 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Deadline for Submission of Eligibility Forms & Requirements | February 10, 2006 | 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Issuance of the Invitations | March 01, 2006 | 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Pre-Bid Conference | March 08, 2006 | 10:00 a.m.
Submission and Opening of Bids | March 09, 2006 | 10:00 a.m.
A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check and the presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (₱2,000.00). Bidding Documents shall be issued only to the prospective bidders or to their authorized representatives.
Activity for the Pre-bidding Conference, Submission and Opening of Bids shall be at the NFA-CLRO, Conference Room, Dolores Highway, Cabanatuan City.
The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY reserves the right to reject any/all bids, to declare the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or Bidders.
(Sgd.) RUBEN J. NEGAD
NFA Regional Manager
Head, Procuring

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 3620-6600-6601 • FAX: 924-6446
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Web site: www.sss.gov.ph
NOTICE
Please get in touch with the Member Assistance Center, Social Security System (SSS), East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, or at any SSS office nearest your place of residence and file your death benefit claim within 60 days upon publication. • sss.gov.ph
NAME OF DECEASED EMPLOYEE | LAST EMPLOYER/ AGENCY | NAME OF SSS MEMBER | DATE OF DEATH
1. Mila Lerma | Unknown | Unknown | September 10, 2005
2. Crispin Balbero | Dapo Negros Trading, Inc. | Rodolfo Balbero | June 18, 2005
3. Agapito Q. Cortes | Unknown | Unknown | July 10, 2005
4. Reynaldo Hernandez | Campostela Hotel, Legaspi Village, Makati City | Unknown | June 18, 2005
5. Lolita Escalante | San Antonio Development Corp. | Unknown | November 10, 2005
6. Ernesto Adarna | Adarna & Associates | Unknown | August 4, 2005
7. Rosa Malcolm | James Alvarez Cinema | Unknown | July 18, 2005
8. Nilda Bautista | Bautista Electric Co. | Unknown | October 8, 2005
9. Esmeralda Castillo | Office of the Provincial Treasurer | Unknown | February 15, 2005
10. Manuel del Rosario | Philippine Airlines, Inc. | Unknown | August 15, 2005
11. Jose Gonzales | Unknown | Unknown | March 15, 2005
12. Leonida Fajardo | Unknown | Unknown | August 15, 2005
13. Philip Abella | Unknown | Unknown | September 15, 2005
14. Francisca Ramos | Unknown | Unknown | July 15, 2005
15. Fred Ramos | Mandaue Foam Co. | Unknown | April 15, 2005
16. Unknown | Unknown | Unknown | May 1, 2005
17. Unknown | Unknown | Unknown | June 1, 2005
18. Unknown | Unknown | Unknown | May 15, 2005
19. Unknown | Unknown | Unknown | September 15, 2005
20. Unknown | Unknown | Unknown | September 15, 2005

METRO

E-mail: [redacted]

Text-in your feedback: inquirer <space> metro <space> message to 2337 (Globe) or 186 (Smart)

Editor: Emer G. Dipasupil

2 rich boys held for 'ecstasy' in Pasig

By Leiza A. del Puerto

THE POLICE ARRESTED TWO scions of wealthy families caught allegedly selling hundreds of "ecstasy" tablets during an early-morning operation in Pasig City Thursday afternoon.

Seized from the pair were some 400 "ecstasy" tablets, estimated at P750 each, from Francis Wendell Bilala, 23, of 19 Hontan, Sampaloc Village, Pasay City, and Marco Alfredo Jardeleza, 24, of 4686 Bonifacio St., Poblacion, Makati.

"Ecstasy," also known as "Ky, ing, cream," "love drug," and "smart drug," is a synthetic amphetamine mostly used by people aged between 20 and 40 and distributed in high-end bars, discotheques and posh condominiums. The drug is believed to be illegally brought in from the United States, Canada, mainland China and Europe.

Thursday's haul was one of the biggest "ecstasy" seizures in recent years, according to Director Marcelo Ele, chief of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force. The first to be arrested was Bilala, who allegedly sold 300 tablets to a policeman posing as a buyer at the Chamonpie fastfood Condominium on St. José Marie Escrivá Drive in Pasig City. De la Rama was caught nearby, police officials added.

He said De la Rama was "the person who supplied" Bilala the tablets. The suspect tried to escape but was subdued by task force agents, the police said, adding that the 500-odd tablets De la Rama allegedly sent peddled 100 meters away.

The police believe the suspects belong to a well-financed drugs syndicate in Metro Manila, at least three other alleged members of the drug ring had been identified, but police have refused to release their names.

He said the members belonging to "affluent" families in exclusive subdivisions of the metro. A European national was believed to be the owner of the drugs, he said.

Jinggoy is acting again

ON TARGET

JEANNAH TAPAY

ONE OF THOSE WHO GRILLED CUSTOMS Commissioner Napoleon Morales during the senate hearings on the national budget Tuesday was Sen. Jinggoy Estrada.

Estrada gave Morales the same scrutiny he gave the alleged rampant smuggling of rice, garlic and the infamous onion. Customs bonded warehouses certainly the guys.

I snickered and senator's roll of eyeball when I saw Jinggoy playing to the gallery in that interview.

I recall that during his father's term, Jinggoy had been seen by senatorial Commission Government Reform Ramon Revilla called to a meeting. Over lunch, he introduced to the secretariat, Fuentes, a second-floor at the Commission of Customs, the most notorious smuggler.

A few days later, the retired Air Force general resigned, citing health reasons although he was in strong-and-hale.

The result: now Fuentes didn't want Jinggoy, his brother Jude, then President Erap's "adviser" with Cafe Geneve, and other members of Erap's extended family pressuring him to go easy on smugglers.

When Fuentes was gone, it was a "free-for-all" at the room said the customs warehouse of then Sen. Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada and his father, ex-Pres Capt. Joki.

Until clothes arrived by shiploads. So did luxury cars. In fact, Joki allegedly drove out of the customs warehouse in one of those luxury shipments. The car was unbonded smuggle from smuggling.

Jinggoy and Jude reportedly used Philip Lee and Lee Mansions as their brothers.

In an election campaign, smuggling campaign during Erap's time, that is to say, Jose Cabletan, head of Task Force Salazar, made a big catch.

A bonded warehouse owned by a Baby Tay was raided by "Salazar" agents. The agents found some luxury cars and other items for smugglers as—hey, really more damaging than—earthenware hydrochloride tablets.

There was a big hi-do over the illegal seizure. But Baby Tay was never prosecuted. And—the Fuentes version—Erap, who was President, an urge of a user much like ecstasy-ride, could not be prosecuted for him.

Guess who was behind Tay going scot-free and the seized Fuentes eventually ending up in the market?

So, Senator Jinggoy was peacebuilding at Fuentes's Senate hearing, people in the know observed. "Hmm."

A military "analyst" was quoted by the Inquirer "Four-star" as stating Brig. Gen. Danilo Borgello impending relief as chief of the Presidential Security Group was some form of punishment.

The supposed analyst—a former military official, and thought-plagueman would have been privileged to Malacañang's patronage.

That analyst was talking like a parrot.

Borgello is being given a field assignment because it's an upward career move, a promotion.

Many heavy generals are retiring this year and Borgello is being groomed to command a division that is headed by a two-star general. Borgello has only one "star."

Right now, since there's no vacancy yet, Borgello has been appointed deputy commander of the Army's 2nd Division.

CORRECTION: In my item on Jan. 11, Saturday, regarding the Northrail-Southrail linkage project, Inquirer will not be tolerated in the Philippines. National Railways (PNR) stands for Legaspi City, Bicolandia since are in Hamtraro (sic), Quezon and Calamba, Laguna.

Let's hope these plans are no longer delayed by militant groups whose agenda and actions have little or nothing to do with the interest of the republic.

No watchmen on the job

LAPSES IN SECURITY ENABLED A THIEF OR thieves to enter the Philippine Sports Commission building in Makati, Manila, and steal a digital camera worth P50,000 and a pair of Bobby Dazzler sunglasses early yesterday morning, according to the National Bureau of Investigation.

Investigators said the thief may have entered the PSC at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex (now 10 p.m. on Thursday to 6 a.m. yesterday. There were no watchmen on post at the area, police said. Margaux C. Ortiz

PSC (CIO) Mayo and Arianne (pale-outfit), together with PCO Jeanne Garcia and Shiena, joined 116 other couples at a mass wedding sponsored by the Philippine National Police yesterday. CONTRIBUTED

Never too late for these couples

By Leiza A. del Puerto

SOME 25 YEARS AGO HE CHERished Arianne, a policeman and his part-ner inspired their relationship to a more enduring one Camp Crame yesterday as he and 116 officials of the Philippine National Police.

"Mine I find complete," Senior Inspector Ludovico Dimalaguen, 54, said after exchanging "I do" with with Arianne, 48. The Dimalaguen were among 27 couples who took their wedding vows yesterday.

The couple's eldest daughter, Jennalyn, was married before her parents took the plunge. She now has a two-year-old son. Asunday Ted learned that her parents were not married when she was in high school.

The Dimalaguen met in 1978, when they both worked for a printing press in Marikina City. Three years later, they were living under one roof. The couple became parents to four girls and two boys.

But Ludovico never got around to asking Arianne to marry him. "Ayaw ko ring masabi! It did not exist to propose," Arianne said. Less for you, Ludovico decided to marry her to get married because it was long overdue. "I thought it would be better if we got married before the eyes of God," he said. The brand-new wife said her husband probably also thought of complications that could arise when he retired. The chance came when Ludovico learned the Command Group, the police's highest policy-making body, was sponsoring a mass wedding on Monday, no nominal reason on the anniversary of the PNP. The police marks its 10th anniversary this year.

Ludovico must have thought it was a chance not to be missed particularly would cost him to spend for the wedding and reception. They were paid for by the PNP. Of the 54 people who exchanged "I do," they were policemen, five policewomen, a female man, undetermined personnel (MOP), and a male MOP. The wedding sponsors included Director General Avelino Lumibao and Deputy Director General Avelino Razon.

Killer of fellow policeman gets life term

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AFTER SIX YEARS, THE FAMILY OF slain police officer Jaime Magalso finally got justice yesterday, but it was less than what they expected.

"We felt the penalties were not enough," said former senator Blanding del Mar, sleuth of Magalso, of the Southern Police District's Intelligence Division who was killed in 1999 while conducting surveillance operations in Pasay City.

Charged with his murder were policemen, SPO2 Romero Isidro, PO3 Jesus Bongon Jr., PO1 Ricardo Gutierrez and civilians Jojo Contreras, Bryan Stella alias Renegado Alvarez and Robert Ito.

Judge Pedro Gutierrez of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 119 ordered Bongon a life sentence and ordered him to pay damages of more than P2.6 million to Magalso's heirs.

Bumble, Isidro and Contreras got 14 years each as accomplices. Stella and Ito remain at large.

MetroBriefs

Work of vigilantes?

A GROUP calling itself "Vigilantes" dumped before dawn body parts in at least four areas in Quezon City, leaving behind a note warning to criminals: "You're next." Wrapped in black garbage bags, the body parts belonging to at least two persons were left on top one other than other behind three police days. The identities of the victims, one of whom was a woman, remained unknown as police, fire, and police authorities worked to the gory task of piecing together the body par ts. Quezon City Police Chief Director Edwin Angel Alparcha Rodriguez Jr. Inspector could even two early to tell if there really was a group of vigilantes roaming the city. "For all we know, they only did that to their enemies and tried to cover that by making Kalookan (their) area the scene of vigilantes," he said. If they were not hired vigilantes, then the city police could have a case there, he added. The recovered body parts were turned over to the Philippine National Bureau. JJ Yap

Passports the easy way

CALOOCAN City residents who lament the lack of government-issued mobile passport can applied and have their documents processed in a matter of hours, according to Epel Tolentino, director of documents, without leaving his car to the Department of Foreign Affairs during the city's 480th founding anniversary on Feb. 2. City Mayor Enrico Echiverri said, some 500 residents with consistent requirements and documents handed from last year's mobile passport program. The program is conducive coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs satellite City Civil Registry Department. Marcial Sy of the city's passport information office said the number of residents who would benefit from the mobile passport program is expected to increase because of the inclusion of other districts in the project. Nancy C. Carvajal

St. Paul Manila

homecoming tomorrow

ALUMNAE of St. Paul University Manila (formerly St. Paul College of Manila) will host their homecoming tomorrow at the school grounds starting at 10 noon. Activities include photo exhibit, reunited by April Dee, High School Batch '81 member Adelaida Mendoza of San Jose and the "Live the Life" raffle draw. The Grand Homecoming Show at 6:30 p.m. will feature some shopping devices by the philanthropic classes. The show will go on Ballroom Jr. Jaime E. Bautista '53, Dancing Queen at High School Batch 1967. Participants are requested to bring ID cards for registration purposes. For more details, please contact the SPUMC office at 5210209 or 5240402.

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PROPE

Metropolitan living in Batangas

By Charles E. Bahay

BATANGAS IS FAST BECOMING a favorite destination for home developers. Blessed with cool climate, pristine surroundings, and an expressway that shortens the trip going to and from Metro Manila, the province offers the right qualities that home builders look for.

The presence of a number of special economic zones in Batangas also brings economic growth and prosperity to the province as well as to its people who now have the capacity to buy quality homes.

Aside from big names such as Ayala-Greenfield Realty Development Inc. and Alsons Land Inc., joined hands in developing Campo Verde (BOH 3861), a community targeting young start-ups or growing families.

Landowner Alsons Land is a subsidiary of the Alcantara Group of Companies, one of the largest and most diversified conglomerates in the Philippines while the developers behind Campo Verde are some of the industry's most respected names: Noel Gonzalez, Francisco Livianian, Manuel Colayco and Cheryl Chan.

Spanish-themed homes

Located within the Lima Technology Center, a special economic zone in Lipa and Malvar, Batangas, Campo Verde offers three distinct Spanish-themed home designs: Casa Catalina, Casa Duquesa and Casa Selina.

"We chose warm earthly tones, high ceilings, etc. because these designs are very popular here and the fact that they suit the surroundings well," said Chan.

Casa Catalina is a single-story 30-square-meter home standing on a 90-sq-m lot. Offering two bedrooms, the Catalina features ample space for parents to play with their kids and even for entertaining guests.

2-story home

The Casa Duquesa, on the other hand, is a

CASA Duquesa

60-sq-m, two-story home that is perfect for growing families. It has provisions for two spacious bedrooms, living and dining areas.

With lot area of 100 sq m, one can still add a modest-sized landscaped garden.

The Casa Selina is considered Campo Verde's premium home offering clean features, roomy interior and an expertly planned layout that maximizes its 82-sq-m floor area.

The Casa Selina offers three bedrooms and an expansive living space for holding family or small gatherings.

"Each of these home design options offers value for money—with a price range from just P800,000 to P2.2 million...and are even made more affordable through Pag-ibig Fund and other private lending institutions," informed Chan.

Sports, recreational area

Campo Verde community also offers amenities usually found in more expensive developments: sports and recreation areas that offers ball courts, play parks, swimming pool and a clubhouse that also doubles as venue for important events.

The community also boasts of carefully planned amenities that naturally highlight the property's natural environment including picnic areas for holding barbecue parties and beautifully landscaped walkways to accommodate morning or late afternoon strolls.

Chan said the community's beautiful surroundings will be maintained meticulously courtesy of a professional village management company that the developers have tapped to assure residents of well-maintained streets, immaculate lawns and well-functioning facilities at all times.

Chan added that the developers will be sponsoring a Grand Handover celebration to-morrow where guests will be treated to a number of presentations and other fun-filled activities.

CASA Catalina

HOME MAKEOVER

The ultimate 'out of the box' experience

FOR THE NEW YEAR, A YOUNG COUPLE'S home was given a total home makeover by Real Living Magazine and a little help from Handyman Do It Best Home Center (Handyman).

• The residents. Johnn and wife Aleleen are pharmacy assistants at a popular drugstore. They live with Aleleen's father, Ding, in a 20-square-meter property in Makati, inherited 10 years ago.

• The house. The boxed-type property can be best described as that—often. "It was just cement and hollow blocks, from the floor to the walls," Johnn recounts. Kitchen windows were square holes chiseled off from the all-concrete unpainted wall and covered with decorative blocks.

The living room floor was in uneven that a step to the kitchen from the bedroom or living room often proved to be a bumpy one. The couple cannot afford to install a ceiling under their raw galvanized iron roof and had to put up with a look in the roof when it rains and hear the heavy drumming summer.

• The stuff. Johnn took the next best step by joining Sonsenal Media's Real Living Magazine's makeover program. "I wanted a dramatic flat impression for guests and neighbors. I wanted a place to retreat after a long, hard day but our needs are far more basic. My wife and I just needed something functional, a place where we can really live in, not where," he recalls.

• The ultimate design. It was a challenge turning the outer bare house into a sanctuary but Handyman joined in and helped achieve the look. The house was painted with sky blue living room walls, light olive kitchen walls, tan-painted with sandstone kitchen floors (with paints and paint materials available at all Handyman branches) for that stone/Mediterranean effect.

A wooden china cabinet, topped with the couple's framed memories, provided the foyer's focal point as it blended with the chest cabinets in white and natural hue. In the kitchen, counter tiles were on-up, floors remained raw and painted, drawers, cabinet hardware and a small window were installed. The once unfurnished living room was magically turned into an indoor sanctuary with white linen cloths hanging across the ceiling.

Elegant lighting fixtures with dimmers were executed to define the space and replaced the ordinary bare-bulb-ing bulbs. While the contractors, coffee table, ceramic floor tiles, and all electrical and painting materials from Handyman added the finishing touches. The rustic cabinet, clay vases, decorative with baskets and other Asian ornaments emphasized the homey ambiance.

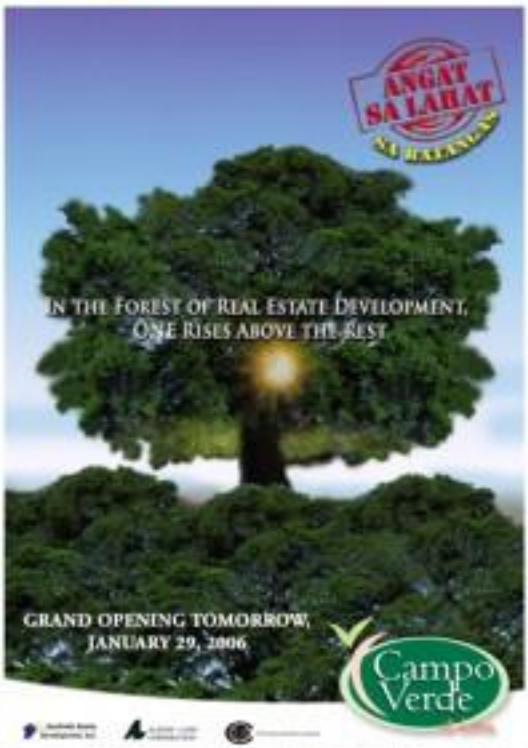
• The stars. Take some time to make the little changes that can pack a powerful design punch for your home's new look this year. It can be from—and within any budget—where you visit Handyman. Check out various attractive setups...kitchens, living rooms, bathrooms and gardens—at www.handyman.com.ph for many more inspiration. Handyman Do It Center branches also offer creative bathroom setups to give you home design options.

• The ultimate "out-of-the-box" experience. "Thanks to Handyman. I got what I wanted, needed and much more!" Johnn says.

Look up at www.handyman.com.ph for many workshop schedules and other event details.)

FROM ORDINARY living room—raw, bare and unpainted—it's a sanctuary

THE CHANGES kitchen and dining area is now a cozy kitchen-dining nook for two.



SPORTS TV

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Molodora

Z Gorres to Vegas on Feb. 3

Roach names possible Pacman foes in Manila

FAMILY MAN: Manny Pacquiao inside the Manila City Hall yesterday.

Pacquiao not amazed at 'new self'

WHAT'S INSIDE
Rain or Shine, Magnolia eye finals
Suns torch Heat; Magic fan streak

INVESTING IN REAL ESTATE SERIES
ERMAN INSTITUTE OF REAL ESTATE

Butch M, Bert C need help

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MANY years that I had sat down face to face with actor/jazz scene Richard Mulligan. He had dropped in at 7:15, who was once a big fan of the Phils.

Broadcaster Ed Wade had arranged the meeting at Bulan's in Quezon City. Ed and Richard were planning to stage a fund-raising concert for the Phils Band. Mulligan who is an Astro-weekly chatter and Lovers & Other Strangers fame, is a baseball fan.

The first hand-raising effort held last December did not generate enough revenue to cover the projected medical expenses and Ed took it upon himself to try again.

The first event was a basketball game. This time it will be a concert at Manila Bay and Bistro in Greenhills owned by Richard.

Richard said he would invite celebrities—especially those who like basketball—to perform for free. Fund-raising events are a regular activity in the United States, according to Richard, and maybe also here. Between Ritualo, Nothing Ladies for the latter though.

Coincidentally, I think it was smart of Reuters to quit MBC-TV's "Hindi Pa Tapos?" moment while he was ahead. He's better off concentrating on the PBA.

Ed Wade's fund-raising effort is a worthy cause. Let's hope it succeeds.

IN HUDDLE

Keith Cellis

(to the basketball priest.)

* * *

The concert was tentatively set for March 6. However I learned from colleagues yesterday that there was another member of the sportswriting fraternity who needed help badly and immediately.

Manila Standard editor Ike Cuevas, another diehard, was still recovering from a previous operation when he was recently found to be suffering from another complication. But he has been unable to report for work since the surgery last year, underscoring his sick leave and vacation leave benefits.

"We have to help him," said an editor close to Ike, one of the nicest guys he can know.

I presumed the situation to be told Richard, who responded immediately. The 3 B's (Blackstone) should be meeting soon to move the concert calendar forward.

* * *

I've been trying to recall the rare words uttered by Intl president Juny Lina which, he said, would serve as the pathway for the nomination of the NBA in the PBL.

Gosh, I just couldn't remember the very exact words. I wrote it down somewhere, but Lina couldn't find my notes either. The two words are very revealing, if I could only remember them or find my notes.

Those two words should give us a clear idea on the direction Juny and the basketball nobles-that-are taking.

* * *

Get this note from Libre sports editor Jaime Jacinto:

Jamie Lopez, victim of a shooting incident inside a Pelaco Lines last December, will forever be in gratitude to those who didn't desert him in the Quirino Memorial Hospital and many others who handed the cab. A widowed mother of three, Lopez of Batolan, Zambales, is on the mend nowadays.

* * *

Friends and relatives of Antonio Gerry Reyes, after reunited with his wife and young daughter during the memorial onslaught in Phuket, Thailand, last year, are invited to attend a memorial in his honor at the Christ the King Seminary Villa Cristo Rey along E. Rodriguez Blvd. in Quezon City on Sunday, Jan. 29 at 4 p.m.

Ritualo sizzles as Air21 stops Purefoods five

ANTIPOLO CITY—After a stinging Game 2 defeat, Air21 coach Bo Perasol had a little chat with Ramon Ritualo and told him to get a little bit more involved in the Express offense the next time around.

The former La Salle hotshot gladly obliged.

Ritualo highlighted a career-high night with his mates bunched in an eight-minute spurt midway the middle quarters as Air21 stayed alive by recording Purefoods, 101-87, last night in Game 3 of their semifinal face-off in the Jun-Mig Coffee-Phila Flavour Conference at the Ynares Center.

Ritualo finished with a career-high 40 points, making nine of his 16 attempts from beyond the arc, as the Express, who stared at cheap-spanking of 2-0 after losing Game 2, suddenly emerged ready for the equalizer in their rare-to-three other tournament's Game 5.

"Buntot almost nagi-hatdoddy was the for us," said Perasol after revealing his little talk with the sweet-shooting guard.

Ritualo knocked in two triples on backtrack plays and scored eight straight points late in the third period as the Purefoods rate on 84-80 advantage, 2:45 before the final period. Prior to last night's explosion, Ritualo averaged just 11.5 points in the semifinals.

Don't wan close early on the the 6-foot-2 sharpshooter was allowed to adjust those numbers. Purefoods had just launched a rally from 11 points down, starting to within four, 78-74, with 4:30 to over the minutes before the break on a run built around a rare triple from Paul Artadi.

Ritualo ended that comeback, knocking in four straight triples that helped Air21 to a 5 51-40 edge, marching into the rounds they had at the range for Game 2 before getting cocky-loose.

The time, the Express were unbugging with Ritualo knocking in his fifth triple of the night over the outstretched arms of Purefoods import Matt Guokas to give the Express a 61-46 lead, early in the third quarter. Francis Odiaua

The scores:

Purefoods

ABDT '89—Black 40, Gerek 19, Mobido 14, R. Dionisio 11, Esmilla 7, Ferrer 6, Dela Z. Dela Z. Dela 2, Y.Dionisio 2, Dr. 1, Esmilla 0, Ruiz 0.

PUREFOODS 87—Guokas 25, Ayo 20, Regis 14, Espinosa 8, Sibulan 4, Lloyd 4, Artadi 2, Brown 2, Yu 1, Villanueva 2, Cortez 0.

Quarters: 23-19, 38-40, 59-61, 101-87.

Que shoots 71 in Qatar Masters golf

DOHA—ANGELO QUE SHOT a ONE-UNDER-par 71 while Frankie Minoza had a 74 at the start of the $2 million Qatar Masters at the Doha Golf Club Thursday.

Zambian's Dennis Sosimo and Argentina's Ricardo Gonzalez shared the first-round lead each eliminated this.

World No. 5 Ivan Lendl, the defending champion from South Africa, also opened with a 71 but world No. 2 Nay Singh of Fijiwiggle with a 73.

The Manila-based Filipinos produced another good display on Friday with a 68 to take a French-held lead over Ireland's Mick Donaghey (69-67—136) as per himself in contention for his first title in the Gulf.

The 28-year-old Sosimo has played the Indonesian side to perfection on the Europeon Tour's satellite-cum-ng, finishing second to Ile in Qatar last year and again ending up as runner-up at the inaugural Abu Dhabi Golf Championship on Sunday.

Thai Thongchai Jaidee and Ireland's Peter Lawrie acred the par three 2/5 card third. AFP

Drag racing today

MORE THAN 80 QUICK-ers are lined up for the second eliminations starting in the third legs of the 2006 Pirelli Asian-PCGD National Drag Racing Championship Sunday at the MRC Drag Strip in Panacan, Batangas. Competing drivers will be disputing titles in the Quick 8, the Fastest 8, the Top Eliminator (for cars 1,799 seconds or faster), Sportsman Class (1,799 seconds to 10.50) and the Hot Street also-pro (10 seconds and slower) categories sanctioned by The Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP), Another highlight of the meet is the Thunder Class for motorcycle manufacturer 1000 cubic meter Asian settlement.

Among the Turns of Group N Motorcycles Racing Assn. from Batangas, Jose Mendoza and Walter Flores of Bicolor Racing. Di Torres will likely face Orlando and David Lim. Cardiel MRC Motorcycle Racing Club or Ramon Capistrano of BOSS 911-2093, 725-3000 or 84-870-5393.

The meet is sponsored by Pirelli Tires, Mobil Oil, Petron, Spectrum and supported by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex, Speed Plugs, Castrol Oil and Goodyear Tire.

DBP

Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Management Board of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on February 6, 2006 p.m., 12th Floor, Suite 2, at the DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on EARS Basis:

NAME & NO.	DESCRIPTION	AREA (SQ. M.)	LOCATION	Floor Price
REAL ESTATE				
METRO MANILA				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	P [illegible]
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BATAAN				
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BULACAN				
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CAVITE				
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LAGUNA				
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NUEVA ECIJA				
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RIZAL				
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SINGLE LOTS				
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[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	P [illegible]

REMARKS AND PROVISIONS:

1. To inspect the properties, interested bidder may call our Branches before the bidding.
2. To submit a bid(s), please put bid(s) in sealed envelope marked "Sealed Bid(s)" addressed to the Chairman, Board of Directors, Development Bank of the Philippines, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City. Bid envelope must be signed by the bidder or his duly authorized representative.
3. The bid security shall be in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check, or bank draft issued by a commercial bank payable to DBP. The bid security shall be forfeited in favor of DBP if the successful bidder fails to enter into a contract within 15 days from receipt of notice of award.
4. The bid security of the successful bidder shall be returned upon execution of the contract of sale and payment of the purchase price. The bid security of the unsuccessful bidder shall be returned within 15 days from the opening of bids.
5. The DBP reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect therein and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Bank.

ANY INFORMATION DESK

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), through its Bidding and Awards Committee (BAC), invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and bid for the supply of:

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C.Y. 2006-2007
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Bidding Documents
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Submission & Opening of Bids/Proposals

For clarifications, please contact:
The Bidding Secretariat – Telephone No. 920-8501

All participating companies are to the Philippines, Bid Bond, Performance, Bid Conditions and Award of Contracts shall not prejudice to any other provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and other applicable government rules and regulations.

The SRA expressly reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect in the bids, or to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government. The SRA reserves the right to declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract on the ground of insufficient funds or any other circumstance which may render the award of the contract disadvantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ENRIQUE LOGRONIO
Administrator

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, Regional Office XIV, through the Bidding Committee, intends to apply the sum of Five Million Seven Hundred Sixty Eight Thousand Pesos (P5,768,000.00) being the ABC to payment under the Corporate Budget for the contract for the Procurement of Handling Services of Palay and Rice in the Provinces of Maguindanao, Cotabato City, Sultan Kudarat and Lanao del Sur. Delivery is required within the time frame as specified below:

Lot No.	Location	Estimated Volume to be Handled in Sacks (50 kg)	Estimated ABC (in Pesos)
1	[illegible]	[illegible]	P [illegible]
2	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
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Rain or Shine, Magnolia gun for final seats

Additional PSC funds from lotto draws

The Year of the Fire Dog ushers in Sheer Driving Pleasure.

On your terms.

Autohaus BMW

Ramirez ready to quit if DOH takes over PSC

Government Warning:

Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Suns torch Heat; Magic fan streak

MIAMI—RAJA BELL SCORED 22 POINTS, STEVE Nash had 21 points and 14 assists, and the Phoenix Suns blew most of a 21-point second-half lead before beating the Miami Heat, 107-98, on Thursday night.

The Suns saw their seven-game road margin whittled to five with 6:15 left after Dwyane Wade hit a pair of free throws to get Miami within 86-83. But Nash hit a 3-pointer on Phoenix's next possession, then added a three-point play about a minute later to ensure the Suns would snap a two-game losing streak.

James Jones scored 17 of his 20 points in the second quarter for Phoenix, which connected on 13 of 26 shots from 3-point range and won 20-for-22 from the foul line—surpassed with a 12-for-12 foul-shooting effort by the Heat.

Wade had 35 points for Miami, which fell to 0-4 against the Suns with the NBA's four best records: Phoenix, San Antonio, Dallas and Denver. James Posey and Udonis Haslem each had 16 for the Heat, and Shaquille O'Neal added 15 points and 12 rebounds.

In Philadelphia, Pat Garrity opened overtime with consecutive 3-pointers and scored nineteen high 26 points, and Orazio Fortenberry had 20 as Orlando's season-high fifth straight win—a 129-113 victory over the Nets.

Rejoin Dooling took the pa-

PHOENIX forward Shawn Marion goes up for a dunk against the Miami Heat. AFP

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Federer reaches men's final

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—TOP-seeded Roger Federer advanced to the Australian Open final with a 6-3, 3-7, 6-0, 6-2 victory Friday over No. 21 Ivo Karlovic.

Federer was sharp—and occasionally brilliant—in beating Karlovic for the seventh consecutive time. The Swiss star now will face heavy underdog Marcos Baghdatis on Sunday as he seeks his seventh Grand Slam title.

Serving notice early that Karlovic would get no easy points, Federer broke for the only time he needed in the first set to go up, 3-1, as one point spinning in from the baseline for a drop shot and flicking a backhand around the net post and down the line for a clean winner.

In the same game, Federer notched another drop and won club over Karlovic's head that he tracked down but rounded well long.

Karlovic leveled the match by breaking Federer as he served at 5-6 in the second set. Federer wasted his first opportunity with a weak forehand into the net, but Federer sliced a backhand just wide on the next.

Implacable as usual, Federer stepped up his game and sipped through the third set, commanding only two unforced errors—after 26 in the first two sets—to whittle counted. With Federer serving at 3-0, Karlovic saw his only break point vanish on a shot that was called long but that TV replays showed was on the line.

Karlovic held serve to start the final set, only to see Federer run off five straight games. Karlovic saved two match points with his serve before Federer finished it off with a serve that Karlovic wheeled into the net.

"I really turned it up when I had to," said Federer.

Serena Big Sekhira were scattered about Rod Laver Arena, and the crowd was clearly behind Federer against the tony Karlovic, who repeatedly questioned calls.

He was fined earlier in the tournament for foul language and was warned twice about obscenities in the quarterfinals.

But 21 and Chang, he became the first Chinese players to win a Grand Slam title. He teaming Lisa Raymond and Samantha Stosur, 2-6, 7-6 (7), 6-3, in the women's doubles final.

Hsieh and Zheng trailed by a set and 3-1 and saved seven match points (one in the second set tiebreaker against their expanded rivals, who won the US Open title. The Chinese pair also saved three match points in the quarterfinals.

Hsieh called the win "a great step" for Chinese tennis. Compatriot Sun Tiantian and Li Ting were the women's doubles gold at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Martina Hingis, returning from a three-year layoff, reached Sunday's mixed doubles final with India's Mahesh Bhupathi. They beat Stosur and Wilson Australian Wad Gumby 6-3, 6-3, and will face sixth-seeded Daniel Nestor of Canada and Elena Likhovtseva of Russia. Hingis earlier reached the women's singles quarterfinals.

In Saturday's women's final, eighth-seeded Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium will try to extend her Melbourne Park streak to 14 wins against No. 3 Amelie Mauresmo of France. AP

He's no Joe Blow, he's Joe Dumuk

By Percy D. Della

HE IS NOT JUST ANOTHER JOE blow when it comes to sports.

He is Joe Dumuk and he makes a lot of sense.

Check out some of Joe's gems:

"Not winning gold would haunt me the overall title is the recent Southeast Asian Games was a godsend. A success devoid of pressure day heroes but 113 were ours."

"But I went to see history we must and spirit. The national dream that was the SEA Games is over. Let us hand together to avoid national despair over the Asian Games this December."

Stress Joe's lips to the nation's eyes to avoid.

Unwarranted. Unwise.

One guy is not sports aristocrat who lives in the limelight. Up front though, he is a sports celebrity of sorts.

One there is the sticky of La Union, he instills the ideals of hard work, honesty and discipline in the minds of young athletes.

All of 5 feet 2 inches, Joseph Alexcjo Dumuk is a giant among the province's sports leaders.

Sports is local. From the sweaty-ish sports to hazy sports stays. Which makes it all the more worthwhile to such provide like Joe and solicit their

COMMENTARY

two cents worth on current sports events.

Here's more of his musings:

"The basketball imbroglio boggles the mind. Our ego supremacy in Asia is history. Pasay has long set in. Why fight over a 15-20 mere delegation with feeble hope of winning one medal. For the same money or even less, we can train and mold 15-20 athletes with a fighting chance to win 15-20 individual medals."

He is now just another Joe Blow when it comes to sports.

He is Joe Dumuk, a fellow with sterling sports credentials who has involved in and around sports since 1973—three years after he finished college at the Lithuan campus of the University of the Philippines.

Dumuk, 58, has had two stints as a staffer of the Philippine Sports Commission during its toddler years.

You can say that Dumuk, a professional mechanical engineer by trade, has had about several jobs to remain faithful to his sports love.

Today he serves as the retread chief of staff to San Fernando City Vice Mayor Reynaldo Valera—known in the South's regional scene for his sports hustle cry "Sa sa-ra Group, ito ay sa-ra sports."

From that tagline-emerged several grassroots sports activities that have since morphed into tournaments of national and international caliber.

The La Union Clerve Open, now in its fifth year of attracting at least three grandmasters, comes to mind. So is the La Union Long Board Open, a magnet for foreign surfers to the waves of San Juan every year.

Chief Dumuk: Joe Dumuk.

He says we broke two SEA Games records on our way to the overall championship. "Hey everybody sound to ignore the fact that those records are a heck inferior than the Asian Games marks."

Chief Dumuk: Hey Hezzy Duggali's long jump feat of 7.8 meters pales in comparison to the 8.44-meter mark of Saudi Arabia's Gaboun Al-Khoualdi in the Asiad. And Arnell Brown's hammer throw of 60.87 meters is barely a heave, against that of Iraqi Waheed Ali's 70.50 meters in the Asiad.

Joe knows his figures. He has been honored three times by the nation's sportswriters for his role as main man man for the Philippine team in three editions of the SEAGames, including the 2005 in Manila last December.

Sports ever. Speaking of local events, the Catalon City Athletic Meet will unfurl in the Garden Stadium high school and other venues on Feb. 10-12. The Meet will climax the city's representation to the Ilocos Region Athletic Association (IRAA) release host city has yet to be announced.

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Website: [illegible]

Editor Rod Q. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Pastrana

VAT collections fall short of target

BIR, Customs blame loopholes in old law

By Michelle V. Rosco

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COLLECTED ONLY P156.82 billion from the value-added tax last year, with the Bureau of Customs contributing P69.4 billion while the BIR accounted for P87.46 billion.

The Customs was supposed to garner P2.5 billion from the VAT while the BIR, the government's main revenue source, was tasked to collect P94.7 billion last year. These targets did not take into account the additional revenues from the VAT Reform Law because of the uncertainties in its implementation last year.

The VAT Reform Law was delayed for four months because of petitions by various parties before the Supreme Court. It was estimated to have generated about P4 billion in additional revenues between November and December last year.

The BIR and the Customs have blamed loopholes in the old VAT law for their failure to hit their VAT collection goals.

The BIR's VAT collection, however, was higher than the 2006 figure of P80.22 billion.

In a report to the Department of Finance, its head agency, the BIR said the lower-than-programmed VAT collections were due to the increase in the input VAT credits claimed by various such as manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing, audio and television, master services, cement and telecommunications.

Under the old VAT law, businesses could claim all their input VAT credits, a law which the DOF and the Manasil for have potential revenues and abuse that as a source of tax. Differently, The DOF and the IRS suspected that some businesses were claiming more than their actual input VAT credits.

Under the new VAT law, the government imposes a 70-percent VAT cap, which the cap, the maximum amount of input VAT credits that a business can claim is equivalent to only 70 percent of

NEXT PAGE

Shell leads consortium in oil search off Palawan

By Russell W. Dizon

THE OPERATOR OF THE RECENTLY-finished Malampaya natural gas project has teamed up with the government and two private companies to look for oil and gas in service areas in the country's northwestern field.

In a joint statement, Shell Philippines Exploration BV said it signed a SC 69, the Department of Energy, Exxon Mobil Philippines Exploration Co. (Philippines), and South China Resources Inc. a deal on Service Contract No. 69, which covers a "relatively unexplored" area of 1.91 million hectares offshore north of Palawan.

Interest in SC 69 is distributed as follows: Spex, 55 percent; Kulpet Philippines, 30 percent; and SCR, 15 percent.

Kulpet is a subsidiary of state-owned Exxon Petroleum Corp. while SCR is a local firm listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange and involved mainly in oil exploration.

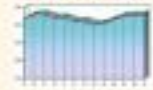
An SC is a license issued by the energy department allowing explorers and developers to occur oil and gas prospects within the country and continue to the production stage in case petroleum reserves are found.

The partners said the SC 69 project, which need to be covered by Geophysical Survey and Exploration Contract No. 69, involves "one of the promising sites" for petroleum exploration, identified by the Philippine Petroleum Resource Assessment Project Study.

The study, conducted by the Energy Agency for Development Cooperation (Petrad) and the DOE, provided updated data on the petroleum basins in the country and identified the level of prospectivity of each area.

Under SC 69, the consortium committed to spend at least $24 million or about P1.27 billion during the seven-year exploration period.

Currencies



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

$1 = ₱52.181

As of 5 p.m. Jan. 27, 2006

¥1 = ₱0.4520

As of 5 p.m. Jan. 27, 2006

GOLD: $[illegible] per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 27, 2006

Stock Market

Shares close 0.19% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.19 PERCENT higher yesterday as institutional gains in index-heavyweight PLDT allowed the economic proxy record-worded advance, dealers said.

They said the gains, however, were capped by profit taking before the Lunar New Year holiday, when many fund managers are much [illegible] on conviction.

The composite index rose 4.208 points to 2,321.06 after trading between 2,317.81 and 2,326.46. Value turnover [illegible] million shares worth P1,207 billion.

The all-shares index rose 4.22 points to 1,024.48.

AFP

DENR rushing in the wrong direction, NGOs say

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

LAST JUNE 11, a LETTER WAS sent by leaders representing thousands of holders of Certificate Based Forest Management Agreements (CBFMAs).

They asked for a meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to address what they believed was the unjust and unlawful cancellation of CBFMAs.

There appears to be no rush in answering the letter.

In essence, these appeared to be an exercise in rush to cancel all CBFMAs without due process.

CBFMAs were issued by the government to get communities to take on the responsibility of governing the forests and associated plantations.

CBFMAs also provide much needed livelihood to the communities scattered in the coastal areas and 1.9 million of the 4 million hectares of forests in the uplands are covered by CBFMAs.

The suddenly raised all the CBFMAs without due process is certainly rushing it for wrong direction.

AO 34 and 35

Many CBFMA stakeholders claim that the rush in CBFMA cancellation is connected to the similar rush in the DENR Secretary's signing of (ADM) Administrative Orders (ADO) 34 and 35. These cover mangrove areas and upland forests, respectively.

Through signed, these AOs have not been published, and therefore, have not yet been implemented.

They were also not subjected to the appropriate consultation needed for AOs with such far reaching impact.

Fortunately, after hearing from members of the Association of Riverine Solomeños last week, the DENR Secretary ordered the revision of AO 34.

Meanwhile, there appears to be no rush in the withdrawal of the order to convert all CBFMAs.

COMMENTARY

As such day passes, our environment is further endangered, and the last livelihood opportunities become poorer.

Stakeholder involvement

Last June 18, the Tambuyog Development Center (TDC) met with stakeholders of five CBFMAs covering mangrove areas in Cebu and has described their urgent plea to DENR.

Like many CBFMAs, their contracts were cancelled despite their good performance in safeguarding the environment and providing livelihood opportunities.

Silver lining

Every dark cloud, however, has a silver lining. And in this case, there are two.

The first is that the principle of CBFMA cancellation is good, but only if applied properly.

It is believed that several CBFMAs are controlled by syndicates. Others are performing poorly. The cancellation of these CBFMAs is long overdue.

But the second is not cancelling even the well performing ones.

The automatic cancellation order should, thus, be immediately revoked.

The second silver lining is the attention now given to the need of investments in mangroves and upland forests.

The CBFMA stakeholders know that investors can provide them with technology, markets, credit, and other assistance.

This would then be a win-win solution for both the investors and the stakeholders.

The Tambuyog pointed to the 2,000 hectares that aquaculture farm beneficiaries had cultivated in partnership with Ortiz Inc.

But as in the DOLE case, the investors should have the power to decide on the appropriate form of conception.

TDC Executive Director Annie Tanchuling said: "We must recognize the appropriate conditions on the economic arrangements with the the prospective investors, depending on each unique situation."

In all cases, safeguarding the environment and providing the community with livelihood opportunities must be the top priorities."

If we quickly implement Tanchuling's recommendation, we will finally be rushing in the right direction.

(The author is Agrewatch chair, former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agrewatch@philippine.com or telephone 82-40-9650.)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID FOR DRYING, WAREHOUSING/SERVICES FOR MILLED RICE

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BIDS

dti

NOTICE

THE PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER

FELLOWSHIPS

THE 2005 AGENCY PERFORMANCE AWARDS

Government honors outstanding private recruitment and manning agencies

The Awardees

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

BDO, SMIC list GDRs in London

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

INVESTMENT FIRM PRIMEBRIDGE Holdings Inc. of retail magnate Henry Sy has listed 9.1 million global shares of its banking affiliate Banco de Oro Universal Bank on the London Stock Exchange (LSE) on Thursday, the company yesterday said in an investment.

Primebridge is a subsidiary of Sy's flagship company SM Investments Corp. (SMIC).

The Global Depositary Receipts (GDRs)—a form of fixed-trading investment traded on the overseas markets—represent shares of Banco de Oro Universal Bank and are equivalent to 18.8 percent of the bank's total outstanding shares.

Banco de Oro's GDRs are said to be the only Philippine issue listed on the London bourse. Sources said the GDR fetched a price of $13.778 apiece when it was listed on Thursday. The price was higher than its initial offer of $12.76.

The GDR offer attracted strong interest from international investors, with 41 percent of demand coming from the United States, 32 percent from investors in Europe, and the rest coming from Asia.

The funds to be raised from the GDR offer will be set aside for BDO's expansion and for its acquisitions.

Priced at $12.76 on Jan. 19, the GDRs have since increased in price by approximately 4 percent.

"The success of this GDR offering reaffirms international investors' confidence in the BDO team, and the strategy that they are undertaking," said Jose Ibo, SMIC chief finance officer.

Primebridge, which has a 22-percent stake in BDO, raised $130 million from the sale of the GDRs to foreign investors. Each GDR represents 20 shares of Banco de Oro.

The deal was managed by Macquarie Bank Limited.

The SM Group's move to raise more than $6.1 billion from foreign investors is in preparation for its controversial acquisition of Equitable PCI Bank, according to financial analysts.

Banco de Oro president Nestor Tan had said that the funds would be used to boost the group's holdings in the country's second largest bank.

"[The] proceeds from the sale of global depositary receipts will be used for various SM investments projects, including the purchase of more EPCIB shares, should it become available," Tan said.

Tan's statement may be an indication that the SM Group is preparing for an aggressive merger battle with existing shareholders of EPCIB and other potential buyers of the bank.

HENRY SY

First Gen expects ₱8.5B from IPO

FIRST GEN CORP. EXPECTS TO raise P8.5 billion from the sale of new shares during its maiden offering on Feb. 15.

This is the stock exchange's first major initial public offering for the year.

The total amount is lower than First Gen's earlier projected proceeds of P13.3 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), First Gen said that it has lowered its initial public offering price, after receiving regulatory approval.

The price of each share is now P47.

First Gen will offer 180.91 million primary shares.

No secondary shares will be offered.

Some 20 percent, or 36.18 million common shares of the total offer, will be allocated to small local investors.

First Gen will start its domestic offer on Jan. 31.

Local brokers said it has an P47, First Gen will trade at 9.5 times the 2006 price earnings, which is at par with independent power producers in the region.

But its revenue growth prospects are hinged on whether First Gen will be able to increase its generation capacity through acquisitions, local analysts said.

First Gen earlier said that the net proceeds from its primary offer would be used to improve existing facilities, and finance its capacity expansion, which may include the acquisition of power generation facilities.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Hoarding feared as sugar prices surge

By Christine A. Coplican

WITH LOCAL SUGAR prices surging to almost P1,000 per 50-kilogram bag (LKG), the Sugar Regulatory Authority is preparing to fend off market speculators and hoarders of the vital commodity.

Sugar mill gate prices rose by 56 percent from an average P700 per bag due to growing demand from local and international markets.

The sugar hi-prod. ut wheat, which enables users a substitute for traditional food back to sobriety, also contributed to the growing demand.

The current surge in prices will affect small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which account for 98 to 99 percent of the estimated food demand placed at 1.06 million metric tons, SRA Administrator James Christopher Lediesta yesterday said.

"We have to break the speculation happening now and put back the sanity into sugar trading," he said.

As an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, the SRA has its control over the sugar supply now in the hands of traders.

Lediesta said that the observed price behavior indicates hedging and speculation in the market as some producers are concerned that a shortfall will occur.

To temper the rise in local sugar prices, the SRA has announced that some 54,000 tons of sugar will be released duly free to shore up the local supply and meet the requirements of the limited times.

This will be the first release in four years since the country will be exporting sugar.

In the past, local production has been at a surplus.

Filinvest gets nod to raise capital

FILINVEST LAND Inc. (FLI) has received the approval of the corporate regulator to raise its capital by P6 billion.

In a previous filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), FLI said it would be issuing its authorized capital stock to P14 billion from P8.0 billion.

Of the increase, 25 percent or P1.5 billion has been subscribed and paid in the form of stock dividends.

FLI earlier said it was setting aside capital expenditures of P8.0 billion for the next five years as developing several projects. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

VAT collections fall . . .

From page B1

to cover the VAT. Before Lim, the government hopes to generate P81.4 billion in additional revenues this year. The new law basically expanded the coverage of the tax to include oil and electricity, among others, and will raise the tax rate from 10% to 12 percent starting Feb. 1.

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SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangosong
Assistant Editor Stella O. Gonzales

Geneticist searches for 'Adam'

By Charles E. Ibñez

SEVERAL OF THE world's dominant religions believe that human beings came from one common ancestor, a so-called "Adam" who fathered us all. But did such person really exist?

The age-old question of where man came from has also intrigued Dr. Spencer Wells, an American geneticist and a National Geographic fellow explorer in residence.

He said new DNA studies suggest that all humans descended from a single African ancestor who lived some 60,000 years ago and he expects a definitive answer in the question by 2010.

Last May, Wells was put in charge of the $40-million Genographic Project, a privately funded five-year collaborative effort of the National Geographic Society, IBM and the Waitt Family Foundation. It aims to collect 100,000 gene samples from indigenous people as well as from the public around the world in the hope that they would reveal more out of pattern that could trace humanity's longest back to Adam.

The team primarily employs the Y chromosome (the male sex chromosome), which Wells likens to a family name since it is passed down from father to son.

In a phone patch interview, Wells said they already know which markers on the Y chromosome to focus on.

"By getting samples of the Y chromosome, we will be following DNA (info that go into the past," he said.

Unchanged through generations

The Y chromosome, which only males possess, is passed from father to son without recombining with the female parent's chromosomes. The Y chromosome, explained Wells, remains basically unchanged through generations, except for random mutations.

Random mutations in DNA, which happen naturally and are usually harmless, are called markers that geneticists can use to go back in time and trace exactly the point at which it first occurred.

This way, Wells' team is able to chronicle time when and where a new lineage began.

Collection centers

A total of 10 DNA collection centers around the world will obtain samples from indigenous peoples. Wells said the genetic markers in the blood of these groups have remained relatively unchanged for generations.

The public, however, will be late for sale (at $99), which contain cheek swabs that will be used to scrape the inside of the mouth for a DNA sample. The swabs are then mailed to a central laboratory for analysis.

Also free to six weeks, the results of the analysis—accessible only to the participants—will appear on the website www.nationalgeographic.com/genographic behind a password provided in the kit.

Wells said the genetic tests his team would perform on the specimens have been designed to research early human origins and movements and will not be used for any other purpose. Proceeds from the sale of the kits will be channeled back into the project to support additional research and to fund education and outreach preservation efforts benefiting indigenous communities participating in the research.

"We want to ensure participation by being extremely clear about what we do and do not do," Wells said.

Pregnancy and traveling

By Rahul R. Castillo, MD

JENNIFER GAL, WHO'S ON HER second trimester of pregnancy, writes to ask if it is still safe for her to travel by air. This is her third pregnancy and she had no problems during her first two pregnancies.

MEDICAL FILES

"Pregnancy should not be an excuse to hibernate, unless yourself or develop travel inertia," says Dr. May Ann Lao from the St. Luke's Medical Center. But although pregnancy should not preclude travel, Dr. Lao says the safest time to travel is between weeks 14 and 28, when chances of having a miscarriage or premature labor are still.

Tips for expectant mums

Dr. Lao writes for the Health & Lifestyle magazine and shares the following tips to make an expectant mother's trip worry-free and pleasurable:

1. Know important dates and numbers. Memorize or write on a notepad the following information: age of gestation, expected date of delivery, last menstrual period, contact numbers of your obstetrician and of person(s) you want to be immediately informed in case of emergency.

2. Know your medical history. Include in your notepad tablets points of your medical history, including allergies to food or medicines, past and present illnesses. Hypertension, diabetes mellitus, bronchial asthma, congenital heart disease, coronary artery disease, peptic ulcer, ves.1, and the name(s) of doctor(s) attending to your pre-existing medical condition and preferably, their contact details for reference purposes.

Medicines, immunization

3. If on maintenance medication for a disease, buy enough medicines for the duration you will be out. Pack them in neatly labeled Ziploc bags.

4. Consult your doctor regarding your travel plans. Preferably, have a prenatal checkup 1 to 2 weeks before you travel. Also inquire what necessary precautions are needed and what drugs are safe to take in case of travel-related illnesses such as diarrhea, vomiting, dizziness, headaches, cough or fever. Request for prescriptions for emergency drugs. Ask your doctor if there is a need for immunizations.

5. If traveling by air, remember these tips:

• Wear a seatbelt at all times. The lap belt should be secured below the belly and across the pelvis. Never strap the seat belt across the belly since an intense jolt could cause the placenta to separate from the fetus.

• Avoid air travel during the first trimester. The low air pressure in the plane causes oxygen reduction in the blood, leading to shortness of breath.

• Drink lots of water before and during the flight to avoid dehydration from low cabin humidity. Dehydration can harm the fetus.

• Avoid carbonated drinks, which increase gas formation and may not really enhance hydration.

• Walk around the cabin and exercise your legs every hour or so often as you can to avoid deep venous thrombosis, which may lead to pulmonary embolism. Request for an aisle seat so you can easily get up and move around.

• Do simple leg exercises while sitting down. Extend your head then gently flex your face to stretch your calf muscles. Rotate your ankles and wiggle your toes. This helps improve blood circulation.

• Pinch your own muscle such as flesh in chest, front, arms, elbows, ears and other unexpected places.

Warning signals

6. Do not ignore symptoms. These may be warning signals of complications in pregnancy. Immediately consult your doctor if you develop abdominal pain, chest pain, chills and fever, excessive bleeding, loss of edema in extremities, weight gain, excessive vomiting and diarrhea, severe headaches, flashing lights in front of the eyes or double vision.

See a doctor also if there is itching all over, leaking of fluid from the vagina, painful or burning sensation, uncomfortable hyperactivity of fetal movements, three and infrequent movements and vaginal bleeding.

More math teaching tips

Queenie N. Lee-Chua

WHY DID TEACHERS ARE NOT creative? This semester I am teaching Learning Processes in Math and Science to a group of motivated high school math teachers who share the following tips in making this subject more interesting for their students.

Domingo T. Ravelo Jr. teaches fourth year math at the Cabanatuan National High School in Cagayan. He tells us how he improves student learning:

"Relating math to other subjects. To enhance student learning of fraction operations, I coordinate with other teachers who handle topics that require such knowledge.

For instance, in music, students need to know the number of beats for a dotted quarter or an eighth note. Since a quarter note receives one beat under a 4/4 time signature and a dot after a note indicates that one-half of the previous beat should be added, then a dotted quarter note receives 1 + ½ beats or 1½ beats. A dotted eighth note receives ½ + ¼, or ¾ beat. This way, I not only teach math but also aid in other subjects.

Arousing curiosity

• Journal writing. Reflections and writing tweak the curiosity and challenge the ingenuity of my students. They improve thinking and creativity, not just in math but in real life. After a certain lesson, for example, on fractions, I ask my students to reflect, relate and cite analogies relating their life to the lessons in the form of poetry. I read their inspirations aloud and discuss why they use one thing or the other. Through this I can also check their misconceptions. This activity demands more time, but the rewards are worth it. I give samples as their English teacher for editing, and keep them in my file.

• Group work. I group my students in such a way that all members in the group can help in making their assignment. Members take turns in presenting answers by using figures of their choice.

Once, a group of girls decided to present their answers by banging a flower. One solution was shown on a petal, another solution on another petal, and so on, forming a flower. The students developed cooperation, reasoning, fellows, critical thinking, respect for others and a sense of responsibility.

Grading indigenous communities participating in the research.

"We want to ensure participation by being extremely clear about what we do and do not do," Wells said.

Concrete examples

Cheryl G. Francisco, who teaches first year and elective fourth year math at Marciel O. Atacio Memorial School in Aliaga, talks about the importance of concrete examples:

"When I was teaching geometry, I helped students understand the formulas for solids by using concrete manipulatives. I provided them with styrofoam, a cone and a cylinder (which I made myself because there were no available materials) and used to fill the solids with. I let my students experiment with the content of the solids and compare the quantities, and then led them to derive the formulas for volume.

Applying lessons

Michaelangelo Milo L. Lim, who teaches first year and third year math at Salvador National High School in Oriental Mindoro, says:

"I think of practical ways by which my students can apply lessons in real life. One day in December, we were supposed to put up Christmas decorations in the room. Since I already taught perimeters, I added new concepts on the construction of cardboard models of regular polyhedrons: icosahedrons, hexahedrons, octahedrons, dodecahedrons and octahedrons.

Using cardboard, tassels, tape, ruler and protractor, my students came up with delightful creations. I also assigned a special project that used polyhedrons instead of the usual star. I was amazed by my students' creativity. Some pairs came with tassels, decorations on the edges, and polyhedrons joined to form a tree.

Rating math

Danny A. Asis, who teaches first-year math at Bobongaan National High School, a barrio in Oriental, says his students keep lists on his text: On the first day of school, I make my students rate math from 1 (they hate it) to 10 (they love it). Throughout the school year I keep in mind that at least they have an increase. In increase. For me, learning to love math is the first step to doing it well.

Sleeping for science

DISCOVER

Hyssie Santos Bañlon

LAST SEPTEMBER A STUDY IN the Journal of the American Medical Association (Jama) showed that lack of sleep severely affects doctors' responses and ability to function.

Several medical residents from Boston University Medical School who worked lower night in the hospital and had been working 90 hours a week for the last month, participated in the study conducted by researchers from the University of Michigan Health System (UMichigan). They found that under these conditions, the residents had slower reaction times and were more likely to make errors and be involved in car accidents because they weren't fully rested.

In the second half of the experiment, the residents were tested again while on more relaxed schedules and without working overnight prior to the trials. The time, the tests were done both before and after they were given three to four alcoholic beverages. Researchers found that the residents' response times after they were sleep-deprived were similar to the response times recorded after they had a few drinks.

The study demonstrates what people have known for years—lack of sleep equals not enough rest equals reduced productivity the next day.

But how much sleep should people get to feel well-rested? Despite the old adage that eight straight hours are required for a full night's sleep, studies have shown that many people get less or less of sleep and are at alert and responsive as those who slept longer.

Sleep inertia

Perhaps getting enough sleep isn't the only factor to be considered when it comes to being alert. Perhaps the amount of time is taken someone to become fully alert after waking is equally important. This is the idea behind the paper from researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Kenneth Wright of the Sleep and Chronobiology Laboratory at CU Boulder was the lead author of the paper, which appeared in the Jan. 13 issue of Jama. He refers to the grogginess associated with awakening as "sleep inertia."

The study involved eight men and nine women, with ages ranging from 20 to 45. Participants did not take any drugs, caffeine or alcohol for three weeks prior to the trials to make sure their sleep or lack of it was not influenced by external factors. The volunteers were asked to keep sleep diaries and wear sure they all slept approximately eight hours a night during this period.

During the fourth week, the participants spent part of their day getting used to filling out a standardized math worksheet that required them to add up several pairs of randomly generated numbers. At night they continued to get eight hours of sleep.

On the seventh morning, participants were given the test as soon as they awoke. They were kept awake for 26 hours, and took the test several more times throughout the day.

Effect on performance

"Cognitive performance immediately on awakening from sleep was worse than performance at all subsequent points measured across 26 hours of sleep deprivation," Wright et al. wrote in their study.

Based on the test scores of the participants, sleep inertia can last from a few minutes to several hours, as evidenced by the lower test scores some participants recorded up until two hours after awakening.

Wright et al. also noted that the amount of sleep one got affected the time it took for sleep inertia to wear off. This might be because people awakened from a deep sleep are groggier than those who have to deal with interruptions.

The study was funded by Nasa's National Space Biomedical Research Institute. There are several jobs where people are required to be alert as soon as they awaken, such as astronauts in space, and air traffic controllers on the ground.

Wright et al. suggest that future studies should look into how overcoming sleep affects the sleep deprived, and should involve larger test groups for more reliable results.

UP offers occupational health and safety course

THE UP MANILA COLLEGE OF Public Health is through the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health will host the 10th postgraduate course in Occupational Health and Safety from April 10 to 28 at the CPH auditorium on E Gil Street, Ermita, Manila.

The course is open to physicians and other health professionals. It includes the Department of Labor and Employment's training requirements for company physicians, nurses, safety officers, physical therapists, occupational therapists and dentists.

Course coordinator is Dr. Benjamin C. Nisay. For details call Chit Jetly Ruby at 526-5966 or 526-7302.

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Nip, tuck and tweak your life in 10 Super! steps page C4

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On a high with Pinoy talent

2 G.T. Wild HURRIED TO find this sparkling new (and usually jampacked) hangout closed last weekend. It didn't seem to be closed for a private function because the noise bar was virtually ... oh ... deserted, with only its owner near-deaf silence greeting us at the glass door. (The fact that we were able to unanimously find parking on the street without any problem should have already given us a major hint.) Answering on a few faint whispers, some lonely bars marked some heights, prompting a nearby residential community to launch a complaint. The good news, we hear, is that the establishment is mounting a mighty comeback (try) soon!

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Ibarra

Terra Au Go Go: Revenge Against The Rain @ Cubao X, 8 p.m. tonight

Attracting overtime from indie and punks to college kids and yuppies, the bimonthly party, Terra Au Go Go, is turning out to be one of the most eagerly-awaited Anti-"G" events in town. The latest night of music outfit Terra Records, the crowd-drawing concert was created to showcase the six diverse artists under its wing: Radioactive Sago Project, Juan Pablo Dream, Drip, Up Dharma Down, Mahjhana, and Cloudboy. Festival. Catch them tonight, along with 11 guest bands, at Cubao X (Markins floor depot, Araneta Center, Cubao. "The event also doubles as the launch of UDD's debut album, 'Hang moved.") All that for only P50. Not too shabby! Call 644-4636.

Filipinas @ CCP Main Gallery, until March 12

"All my life, I have been fascinated by the Filipina, how she holds power within our societal system, how she manages this power by quietly taking on private roles, and how she uses this power to eventually serve her own," shares photographer Jon Lorenzo, whose one-woman show opened on Thursday at the CCP Main Gallery. On display on intimate portraits of 30 women, chosen for their fine achievements and the influence they exercised over them. No silhouettes or extreme frontal poses or backdrops were used, only B&W film, a simple background, and a classic style of studio photography from the '60s and '70s. Call 832-3702 or visit www.ghostlets.splots.com/filipinas.

Nyko Mack @ Saguijo, Feb. 3

Sth never blows away when our first heard her performance at the opening of the brand new Heat in Ichi Shangri-La, mistakenly assuming that what we were listening to was a compilation of great smoothing electronic music played in through the restaurant's speakers. To our utter shock, it was an actual live performance by Manila's hottest new electronic artist, Nyko Mack. MRC's head honcho, Francis Lumen, who heard them rave concerned one. New experience electronica at its wildest best with multi-talented, modern performer Nyko Mack, the hottest conjuring sonus for globe to search of beats and back, infusing her classical jazz background with harmonia and a few heady strokes of hip-hop-tested inspired. On Friday, bring your passports to Saguijo (79 El Dejo St., San Antonio Vill., Makati, phone: 897-8629) as the talent you smuggle to the throbbing heart of Brazil through gypsy strings, ultra-jazz beats, and cryptic musings. Dress casual!

Big Brother, The Gathering

Hanging out with them, you must expect the unexpected. The craziest events unfolded during the course of this shoot. And everything was caught on tape

Nene

The thing about Sam is that ... he's easy to be with.
The most important thing I've ever learned is that ... life is full of surprises and inspiration.
I wish when I started all I've been told is ... be careful.
The thing that makes me most angry is ... injustice.
When I retire, I would like ... to be an educator. I aspire to be ... a good leader.

Sam

The worst thing that ever happened to me was that ... I got heartbroken.

Jayson

If I was the most powerful person on earth ... I will transfer to Mars or Jupiter.
The thing that makes my life worth living is ... knowing that hope is always here.
My 5 favorite words are ... eat, sleep, sun, hand motion, pray.
The weird thing somebody said about me was ... I'm plastic.
My favorite moments are when ... I'm watching family.

Say

The thing about Sam is that ... sometimes people mistake you as their property and don't care about your feelings.
I wish when I started all I've been told is ... be on the safe side.
The most important thing that ever happened to me was that ... I got my head broken for the third time in a row.
People might be surprised to know that ... I eat rice and toast 4 sets.
The soundtrack to my life would include ... Fry and Dirty Hours by Melody Moore.

Uma

If I was invisible for a day, I would ... walk around naked.
If I was the most powerful person on earth ... I'll allow marijuanians to be the truest person.
My favorite moments are when ... I'm home with my mom.
The thing about Sam is that ... it's overrated.
I'm working as for ... Stella X-Ross.

Cass

People might be surprised to know that ... I am not a party goer.
The thing that makes me most angry is ... when someone cheated on me.
The weird thing somebody said about me was ... I was the cheapest person in west Ilocos.
My earliest state of mind is ... my career.

Frances

My biggest indulgence is ... eating a lot.
If someone would play me in my biopic it would be ... Brad Pitt.
I aspire to be ... a famous celebrity.
My favorite moments are when ... I shot my wife and my child was born.
My favorite words are ... Xmas, shopping, wine.

Jenny

When I retire, I would like ... to put up my own business.
The thing that makes my life worth living is ... living with my son, my husband and family.
If someone would play me in my biopic it would be ... Demi Moore.

Bob

If I was invisible for a day, I would ... go inside President GMA and Mike Arroyo's room and see what they're doing.
When I'm gone, they'll probably say ... Gobbish cloud is a really nice and cool guy.
If money was no option ... I'll buy Starbucks, Caseknot and Powerplant.
When I retire, I would like ... to live and work in a farm.
I aspire to be ... a good politician.

Raquel

The thing about Sam is that ... you're named by the people.
People might be surprised to know that ... I'm really super kahuparot pilipit.
When I'm gone, they'll probably say ... was nice but senile.

Rico

The thing about Sam is that ... we sometimes attract self hair.
The weird thing that ever happened to me was ... during a scandal with Sandra in the Big Brother house.
My biggest indulgence is ... putting liquid blush on my cheeks.

Chx

People might be surprised to know that ... I'm just an ordinary girl.
The weird thing that ever happened to me was that ... I've been misunderstood by many.
And what this taught me was ... patience.
If I was invisible for a day, I would ... look under ladies's dresses.

JB

My earliest state of mind is ... there's no way to go but up.
My most embarrassing moment was when ... I was interviewed of showing my sugat on national TV.
People might be surprised to know that ... I am a very simple person. I never fail to keep my cool up despite the controversies around me.
I aspire to be ... a public servant.

Super! Style Directory

All clothes from:
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Inchuk Aurora (09 23 36565),
LZ Fernalan (09 703 11832),
Iron Pinoy (09 0905 617),
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Cignal (2/F Rustan's Makati)
Accessories by Happy David (09 170 86 24)

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ZESTO

WHO'S DA BOY? Rudy Fernandez

BRYSIDE MASTER. Marco Morrone

P.S. WE MISS YOU. Gabby Concepcion

KNOCKOUT KING. MYDA Chair Baguio Fernandez

KUMPANGE'S BEST. Sen. Ulo Lapid

NORTHERN POWER. Gov. Chavit Singson

FIL-AMERICAN FRIENDS. Bryan Viloria

MIXING sports and laughter. Jackie Castillo

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Pakyaw, Pacquiao!

TOTALLY KNOCKOUT COUPLE. Marc Nelson and Miss Earth Precious Morantes

BLONDABE. World Wrestling champion Christopher Cage

BIG BROTHERS. The Filipino-Mexican connection

IN AWARE CAGE. The Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas

PRAISE POWER. Miss before the big game

MASSAGE DELUXE. Wins Pudding Correa

"PINAKAMAGANDA"

THE NUTHER. Leonell Correa's crowning moment with Manny Pacquiao

PACQUIAO'S SUPERMATTER. Bo Law Lay Ngor

Text and photos by Leonell Correa
Super! Correspondent

LAS VEGAS WAS THE PLACE to be last weekend as the Philippine's top businessmen, politicians and entertainment personalities, trooped to the Sin City to watch and support Manny Pacquiao in his highly publicized rematch with Erik "El Terrible" Morales.

Pacquiao was billeted in a huge two-bedroom suite at the magnificent Wynn Resort Hotel and Casino, said to be the most expensive and luxurious hotel and casino in Las Vegas. Arriving after the Wars was given to Manny and the other Filipino fighters of the night, Reuben Gaco.

The Thomas and Mack Arena at the UNLV Campground was filled to the rafters that night, with tickets priced as high as $500 selling out days before the fight.

Seated at ringside were Hon. Governor Mike Arroyo and son Miguel, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando with a few Manila mayors (straight from the Vancouver Conference), Games and Amusement Board Chair Bro. Bolidoy, Rosie Jr., Gov. Luis Chavit Singson, Boy Cott Boxing Promoter Fourie, and Sen. Lito Lapid. Also seen were singer Marian Rivera, actor Rudy Fernandez, Jackie & Dyan Castillo, Marc Nelson with girlfriend Priscilla Meirelles (Miss Earth 2004). Also at the ringside to support the Filipino "southern paw" were World Wrestling champion Christopher Cage and Filipino-Mexican boxer Yo-Yo-Ka, who will be defending his World Boxing Council Light Flyweight title at the Aladdin Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas on Feb. 18.

The main victory party was held in the hottest nightspot in town, Lure, at the Wynn Hotel. People queued for more than an hour just trying to get in and catch a glimpse of the newly installed Super Featherweight Champ. Inside, guests danced the night away and partied like there was no tomorrow. Among the Inner-Circle boys: Bolidoy, "The Black Eyed Pea" Mi "Bebe" was played and the Filipino spirit was the central meeting with sponsors. When Pacquiao arrived, there was Hollywood attention and the moment wouldn't stop clicking. There at the after-party was former mistress Mel Sabay Concepcion, with women flocking to have pictures taken with him.

The morning after the fight, Pacquiao was still in a jovial mood, probably because he was already one million richer. Congressman Mikey as early as eight in the morning, welcoming guests in the suite, proudly showing them his minor bruises and his knuckles that were swollen from all the hard hitting punches he gave Morales. His cheeks Cong Negre plates were pretty other-worldly. Had to be rushed to the hospital after the fight for broken nose and ribs.

So what's next for Pacquiao? A Pacquiao-Barrera Fight? A Pacquiao-Mosley fight? If Koncz is ready, but the boxer said this author that in between fights, he wants to try playing golf for fun. Uh oh. Watch out, Tiger Woods!

PIC PAC BOOM. Signal salute to the new Pinoy power

TWENTY-TWOTS. First Gentleman Mike Arroyo with Pac Man

THUMBS UP. Bolidoy and wife

RINGSIDE VICTORY SUPER! "Pac Man" Manny Pacquiao

Solitary Refinement

From page 114

the Conceptual Age," speaks of the advantages of right-brainers like artistry and empathy over left-brain -dominants like accountancy of math and hard sciences.

Del Pilar also insinuates that "If you have no right-brain abilities and we left-brain inhibitors, then there's a threat. In fact, it's not even a threat. It's simply here to stay. In creative professions, if people aren't creative, they are in for trouble."

At any rate, local analysts like Newport's David Post believe that we should expect "a boom in expansion in all sectors, not just the arts. The new rules will be done release creatively charged, improved, or touched on from." Hence the MBA in the new MBA, the new CPA in the new...

7 Become culturally creative.

Anthropologist Ruth Benedict coined the term "cultural creatives" or "transcendentalists" loosely refers to humanistic/spiritual ideals and lifestyles that are neo-liberal. Numbering to about 50 million in North America and millions more around the world, cultural creatives are out of global financial markets and corporate-driven consumption and create their own resources by having good and having grows. After all, Dame Jane...

8 It's not about money. It's about style.

Paramount World Music was established in 1993 and has become known primarily for upbeat compilations of soul and dance music. Their CD covers feature the distinctive art of Nicola Mitchell and conceal the intellectual in the contemporary. By combining appealing music and visuals with creative social marketing, Paramount's brand shows its in an almost face to today's multi-based music industry—a refreshingly bold move. Pushing a world music lifestyle to spend idea now because...

9 Indie has become the new mainstream.

In the Philippines, bands that were once upstarts—Sugarfree, Parokya ni Edgar, Eraserheads and Rivermaya—are now huge and considered mainstream. It seems that guerrilla is how budget filmmaking will be for the same years. Now that the underground has risen to the surface, is the scene the new edge? As one says, "Once our emerging talents in Pinoy pop culture are, as with anything, I advise you to gather all the info first then..."

10 Edit, edit, edit.

Agent, as trends change with the times, consumers now give us three notebooks but two ears: "Tame of more." Hard you, more less is more, or more is more. But less of more.

What does this all mean? Many all lyrics things comes with infinite in mind, a quieter, more personal and humiliated kind of luxury will replace obvious logomania in fashion, and bright-and-noisome will spread even on items objects and cases as out-of-the-way requirements, like travel, dining, and not-so-much.

Applying this final tip to your life, it just means that you should trade it down to what really matters. Pamindig ko: think about, eh? At least for me. I've decided to cut out the negative so I could finally—and rightfully—focus on the positive. Like, um...

AND I THOUGHT A YOGI WAS A BEAR. The road to enlightenment is a bumpy one.

Solitary Refinement

FEELING LONELY TONIGHT? IS IT YOU USED my birthday as an opportunity to gossip off the writings of Mitch Richmond, a Toronto poet from the epicthood job gateway site of Tuned Freaks, Lucks, according to him, ends you, on a person's birthday the soul seconds, "merges into the heaven to order to replenish itself" and "comes down charged for a whole year to pass."

People! I am chi-cati. Sorry to shoot-smash that fantasy.

That stuff, to say, however, that I have some wonderfulness, in that I'm poking fun at one of my guy's benevolent elephant-style whilsts. It's just that, since what I've discovered, the road to enlightenment is a bumpy one, jampacked with celebrity gossip websites, empty love once, and sometimes, phony love affairs with drunks who give overflown hand jobs in dimly-lit movie halls. I must learn just shaved my two much three four whatevers.

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

After numbing yet another crusty life from a couple weeks ago, it hit me that 2005 seems to be a bit different. Eyes closed and everything, I realized I was fine enough be the unaiding amalgamate of the Double help-yourself journey I've been wiling to steer since the latter part of the boyfriend era. Maybe I'm finally growing up. Or watching too much "Dr. Phil." Or finally growing up. Mmmm?

So, gleaning existential curses from the films of Lee Tsu, Vivienne Westwood and even Jay-Z, I'm dispatching a list of ten personal mottos—my own words of wisdom—that will have you bursting with glass-half-full energy in no time. Or something in that effect. Like, life is why too short to be caught up in a fog so, for all

Wanna, like, make yourself over? Then nip, tuck and tweak your life in 10 Super! easy steps

1 Get busy, be healthy

Your wonder why high school cheerleaders are always perky? And hot? It's 'cause they exercise! A recent study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine reveals "physical exercise has a solid place in the treatment and prevention of some mental health problems." Shocking!

Scientists may have identified a chemical which could explain why exercise is an antidepressant. Phenylethylamine is a naturally produced chemical that has been linked to the regulation of physical energy, mood and response. Gak.

Take it from me, People who hit the gym regularly...and vanish when they are whole they're in to—are more buoyant and less sarcastic than those who don't. Spending of the gym, cardio time flies regardless but whenever I'm traveling to great lumps on my Beat so if I were you, I'd also...

2 Download something ever

There are days when I battle mundanity and times that happen, I go to epitonic.com. It's an awesome site where you can download free and legal MP3s from leftfield bestsellers such as Eat Pirate, Low and Beaches Hoot, among others. Epitonic also has its own radio station where you can educate yourself with jams from other genres like breakbeat, hiphop and indie rock.

If you wanna research more about other bands that sound like your fave acts, hit up pandora.com. Aside from analyzing an artist's musical style, they'll give you a rundown of songs that are closely related to those you already like. Okay, most you're already online, why don't you stay a bit longer and...

3 Get off the grid

Here7wonders.com allows you the opportunity to participate in the first-ever global vote to elect the New 7 Wonders of the World. Culminating in a live, world-wide telecast on Jan. 1, 2007 to announce the winners, the selection process begins on the first hour of the 21 new generation countdown on the Epsilon Island campus in Chile, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and the Taj Mahal in India. Try! If all that talk about travel got you wired, don't stop and continue to...

4 Inspire yourself

You know—single— activity and opinion or it's mainly rad to have a thing that I can focus on which, at the same time, frustrates me. I've learned that, ultimately, it's up to you to find out what makes you happy. It's inside and sometimes tough to look for validation from another person. When Renata DeBenny got mad to "Sorry Brigitte" some ago, it stood wrong. We can shouldn "transplant" you as you should already complete yourself.

Anyway, whether it's dark chocolate, sausage Sharon Cuneta movies, or tenderness that floats your boat, go do it. Pay your own rules. But if this piece of golden advice proves to be a little too fake, then...

5 Be experts, just experience

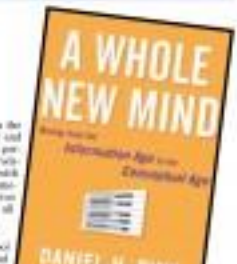
Like any adventurous oriental bride, I set really high standards and expectations for myself. Really.

And when things don't go as planned—relief he's a b'tje, a person falls or whatever projects—I get seriously frustrated out. Like Christmas Bale-Ice "Native-born Psycho" he turned out.

But that was the old me. After getting cobbled while backpacking in the Middle East, seeing a drive-by shooting victim breathe his last in Colombia, and living in other "empowering" (meaning "riddled") places, nothing "rates me as much and I've become more laidback because of it. In fact, whenever I face a seemingly torture-filled scrambled, I summon my shortwise state of mind and cheerfully go to Ate-D's "Get That Life Off Your Shoulders" flow, where it comes to personal problem-solving. Kaboom...

6 Live in a right-brain world

According to author and former colonial speechwriter Daniel Pink, "the demand for logical, linear left-brain people is shifting in favor of abilities like inventive, empathy and big-picture right-brain thinkers." His book, "A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the [illegible]"



LIVING IN A RIGHT-BRAIN WORLD: Daniel Pink's awesome book speaks of the advantages of right-brain traits like artistry, empathy and big-picture thinking.

WORLD BEAT: Pinoy rap group Mistah's music contains elements of several countries.